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ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



# AMMA NEWS

## Homeland Starts from the Borders



**LVI 1**  
Jan-Feb-March  
**2022**

Dedicated to the Border Villages  
of Armenia and Artsakh





SINCE 1918

# AMAA

ARMENIAN MISSIONARY  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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## AMAA NEWS

is a publication of

The Armenian Missionary Association of America  
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Website: [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org)  
(ISSN 1097-0924)

The AMAA is a tax-exempt, not for profit  
organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3)

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### DESIGN

**Caspianseal.com**

### NAMEPLATE

**Yearbook, Inc.**

### PRINTING

**Printsolutions.info**  
Englewood, NJ  
Tel: (201) 567-9622

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Cover Photo: Khnadzakh, a border village in Syunik Province (Photo taken by  
Rev. Sargis Ochinyan, Pastor of Evangelical Church of Armenia in Goris).

# BEYOND THE BORDER

*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Mark 16:15*

By **Zaven Khanjian**, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

## How do you define borders? Are borders the beginning or the end of a designated space?

The latest issue of AMAA News that you are holding in your hands is dedicated to the border villages of Armenia and Artsakh.

Villages are organic habitats. People live there.

When we speak of a border village, we are talking about communities, people, human beings, men, women and children, creatures born in the image of their creator. Thus, the emphasis is on life, comparatively primitive, but yet pure, honest, innocent and down to earth life.

Since the dawn of AMAA's presence in the Homeland following the 1988 earthquake, and in the 33 plus years since, the mission has exponentially grown and expanded into towns and cities, hills and valleys across Armenia and Artsakh. AMAA has touched people, touched their lives. Changed destinies and directions. Spotlighted visionaries and embraced dreamers. Helped dreams come true. The mission has thrived both in the city and among surrounding communities in all fields within its operational boundaries:

- preaching the Word of God
- educating the youth and adults
- shielding and uplifting values
- reaching out to the orphan and the widow.

Historically, AMAA's first encounter with a border village was just ten years ago, (see page 6) but the focus on border life increased right after the 2020 Artsakh War. There was assault at the door. Encroachment created anxiety, fear and darkness. There was need for steadfast resistance, holding the ground, supporting the shoulder and a desperate need for a flood of hope, love and service.

AMAA heeded the call and was there to pay attention, see and listen, greet and hug and reassure love and compassion.

Our promises to our border villages are:

- we will suffer and thrive with you
- we shall come in the dark and light a candle together
- we shall learn from you and together preserve the purest of our values, unstained faith and unspoiled culture.

So, are borders the beginning or the end of a space?

"People put the light on a stand and it gives light to everyone in the house." Matthew 5:15

Border villages are our lighthouses. The end of Armenia's borders is the beginning of 'all the world.'

Please join the AMAA to keep the light on beyond the border. Empower a border family.

Thank you for your support.



February 17, 2022  
Paramus, New Jersey



# THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*But seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness,  
and all these things shall be given to you. Matthew 6:33*

By **Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.\***

**A**s human beings we are on a perpetual mission to seek and find all that we think is necessary for our existence – from the very basics of food, clothing and shelter to the emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. The memories of the Christmas season are not too far behind us, with the crowded malls full of thousands of people seeking that perfect gift for a loved one. That perfect gift, of course, is often less than perfect as it ends up going back to where it came from the day after Christmas. There is no question that we spend a good portion of our lives in trivial pursuits.

The sixth chapter of Matthew is the middle chapter of the three that bring to us Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. This chapter is also of major significance since it includes the Lord's Prayer. It is also in this chapter that Jesus exhorts us not to worry about what we're going to wear, what we're going to eat and what we're going to drink. Jesus is not telling us here that we can do without food and drink, but He wants us to have our priorities right.

Jesus mentions the term "The Kingdom of God" or its equivalent "The Kingdom of Heaven" more than a hundred times in the four Gospels. He uses many stories and parables to try to explain and describe what the Kingdom of God would be like. In the above-mentioned verse, there is one very important descriptive of the Kingdom of God and that is righteousness, His righteousness.

As mortal human beings we have no access to the Kingdom of Heaven yet, but we sure can ask God to establish His kingdom on earth. We do that every time we say the Lord's Prayer, don't we? The key to establishing God's kingdom on earth is righteousness, this time our righteousness. When we human beings learn to be righteous according to God's commandments then all our needs will be met, and all our worries answered. This is how we need to set our priorities in our day to day living to make life on earth "heavenly" for us and our fellow human beings.

For over a hundred years the Armenian Missionary Association of America has had a mission to reach out and help meet the needs of our communities in 24 countries. Our support has been humanitarian to many needy families and individuals affected by an earthquake, wars, economic meltdown and multiple other natural and manmade disasters. Our support has been in the educational sphere by building and supporting kindergartens, schools and institutions of higher learning in Artsakh, Armenia, the Middle East and the United States. We have built and supported summer camps and churches that have provided Christian Education to young and old to bring them closer to God and His Word. Our mission has been and will be to follow the Great Commission of Jesus and spread the Gospel that will lead people to the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.



\***Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.** is the President of the AMAA.





# From Border to Border

## We are our Borders

*We are obliged to settle the frontier regions only with Armenians. Are you listening, young Prince? Only Armenians. The frontier regions are our house's pillars. The enemy's battleaxe will strike at them first, with its merciless blow. But, if those pillars are solid, smoke from the House of Hayk will rise for eternity.*

**Tigran the Great**

By Hayk Khatchaturyan  
Chapter 42, Page 520

By Harout Nercessian and Lusine Ohanyan\*

### Security Situation at the Borders

The expression "border communities" (սահմանամերձ համայնքներ) evokes images of insecurity and fear in Armenia. Communities living close to the Azeri border frequently experience cross border shootings, snipings, kidnappings, enemy incursions, occupied lands, and stolen farm animals. Yes, security is a daily concern of these courageous villagers.

The villagers play a critically important role in the defense of our Homeland's borders. Strengthening these communities is imperative for the defense of Armenia. This has become more urgent since the war of 2020.

The very presence of the border villages is a testament to the enemy's presence, which is very close, and in some places only a few feet away. To be precise, the enemy's

presence is not only at the border, but even right inside Armenian lands. In May of 2021, Azeri forces moved several miles into internationally recognized Armenian territory, in flagrant violation of the 2020 peace treaty).

Consequently, no one living at the border dreams about money, getting a high-paying job, a fancy car, or living in a mansion. Everybody at the border just dreams about peace.



Security is not the only challenge facing these heroic communities. These strategically important communities have fallen behind the rest of the country in education and socio-economic development. Poverty and poor public services are the accepted norms.

These artificially erected socio-economic "borders" that separate cities and villages come with the additional high cost of the huge unrealized potential of these communities. The security situation, coupled with the socio-economic challenges, can easily lead to a mass exodus, collapse of a border community and easily penetrable borders.

Yes, life on the border is lived with great difficulty, but people keep living. They are not complaining about their tough lives, instead, they just keep being brave and ready to support others.

Interestingly, over 2,000 years ago, Tigran the Great instructed his son to be vigilant about the empire's borders by strengthening the border communities. Unfortunately, his instructions have fallen on deaf ears in the 3rd Armenian republic.

The AMAA considers the empowering of these often overlooked communities to be of strategic importance.

Despite the seemingly unsurmountable challenges, our relatively brief experience inspires hope. We are confident that we shall overcome all obstacles and will build thriving border communities that will defend the nation. Yes, we shall see thriving and vigilant Armenian frontier communities that are committed to the Homeland and abide by our nation's Christian values.

## AMAA in Border Communities

The AMAA has been serving these communities with the "We are our borders" mindset and a profound realization of its urgency and with the commitment to persevere as long as necessary.

## Genesis

The first warning signs of the security situation were received in 2013, at the re-start of Azeri aggression following their 1993 defeat. The border communities of Berd, situated in Northeastern Armenia (aka Shamshatin) in Tavush Region, mobilized. The AMAA responded as well. We quickly sent the necessary humanitarian and medical supplies.

Soon after, in August 2013, AMAA launched its border village outreach at the

Choratan village near the town of Berd. Thanks to the support of the Armenian Missionary Association of Australia, AMAA constructed a playground for the local Kindergarten. Coincidentally, this is where Hovig Tamazian, a committed member of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Vana-dzor, was martyred in September 2020 while defending the Armenian borders.

Today, thanks to the efforts of its incredibly resilient and industrious people, and a little push from the AMAA, Choratan is a thriving village.

“

### How It All Began

**"May Your Visit Come with Blessings!"... And it came true.**  
**Ուրախեցրո՞ւ խեղճով լինի մեր գիւղ**

*"May your visit come with blessings." While on a personal visit to Armenia nearly ten years ago, Louisa Janbazian heard this sentence the first time she set foot in Choratan Village, a mere five kilometers from the border. The vineyards on the outskirts of the village are located right in the enemy's crosshairs.*

*Before Louisa's visit, not a single Diasporan ever reached this village, and the villagers, bewildered by the situation, almost like a reflex, kept saying that this was the first Diasporan who had ever come here. Again and again, they repeated the old Armenian expression, "May your visit come with blessings!"*

*Something very meaningful came from that visit. Louisa's many friends and acquaintances soon became familiar with her inspiring story about the village's challenges and its need for assistance. She kept repeating the motto, "This is our Homeland, and our Homeland starts at its borders." Help was quickly on its way.*

*The down-under Armenian Missionary Association of Australia responded by setting aside funds for building a playground for the villagers' children. It became a cornerstone in the village's rejuvenation, which was carried out by locals and others, including the AMAA. This was the AMAA's first investment in the border villages program, and it had only just begun.*

*Now transformed, a visitor cannot imagine what the old Choratan Village looked like. Only the eyewitnesses who lived in the old Choratan remember the change from conditions of abject poverty into a thriving village, where nearly the entire infrastructure is in proper working condition, the adults are employed by the local factory, children think about their education, and young people look after the village grounds.*

*Maybe this story would never have been realized if compassion for our Homeland did not exist. Our Homeland is built on those who are committed to and compassionate toward the Motherland.*

*Let us look after our Homeland, since it needs each and every one of us.*

*We are Armenian because we have Armenia.*

”



Playground for the children of Choratan.



## The War

The war of September 27, 2020 ushered in a new sense of urgency and motivated the AMAA staff to mobilize. As one of the largest Armenian nonprofits, it is our mission to reach out to those suffering the most. Many of our centers turned into "battle fields" (մարտի դաշտի) – Sisian, Goris, Vartenis, Stepanakert, Askeran, Sheen Shoghig Camp in Hankavan and Yerevan SWD district. Even the AMAA Armenia headquarters in Yerevan got into the action collecting food and clothing and providing housing for displaced Artsakh families – women, children and the elderly. Our aim was to protect the displaced people from hunger, homelessness and severe distress.

Unfortunately, the "border village" woes of Armenia have expanded beyond the villages of Tavush. Following the November 10 ceasefire, Armenia and Artsakh lost the security buffer zones that had kept Azeri aggression at bay from Armenian villages. Literally overnight, many Armenian communities of Artsakh, Syunik and Gegharkunik found themselves under the ominous eyes of hostile Azeri soldiers watching them from stone's throw distances. {See map on pages 10-11}

In December 2020, following the ceasefire of November 10, our attention shifted to the border villages in Armenia and Artsakh. During 2021, AMAA teams reached out to more than 94 such villages with various multifaceted and multipurpose programs.

## Strategy

The primary strategy of reaching out to border villages is to expand the geographical area served by our regional offices. This expansion enables the children of these communities to attend AMAA summer camps, participate in the Christmas Joy programs, receive relief supplies and more.

We first visit the villages to gather the youth to listen and learn. Then we work with them to jointly create and implement development programs that best suit them.

AMAA's three-fold strategy consists of:

- Emergency relief
- Events for the children
- Economic development

## Emergency relief

Many families face urgent needs due to poverty, the war or from unexpected life

circumstances. We respond with food, clothing, infant formula and cash remittances. Children are enrolled in the AMAA Child Sponsorship Program.

Housing is a major issue for many families displaced from Hadrut and Shushi Regions. In partnership with Support our Heroes, the AMAA is constructing six homes in the Artsakh border village of Nakhijevanik.

Thanks to the generosity of Juliette from Blue Iris Florist in Glendale, CA, a mother and her two daughters received an urgently needed home in Berd.



Arevik's dream home.

**Aram visited Arevik's home and saw Arevik's terrible living conditions. Aram was moved by what he saw and immediately via his Facebook live posting, drew the attention of his friends to Arevik's story. He made an appeal to help Arevik and her daughters. Juliet from Blue Iris Florist in Glendale, CA responded to the appeal and promised to help Arevik and her daughters. Upon this good news, the AMAA team in Berd, together with Arevik, began a search for a house which equaled the amount of money donated. The house was purchased on September 30, 2021.**

**The AMAA wanted to do more for Arevik and purchased clothing for the family, and furnishings for the house which included a refrigerator and a television which the family desperately needed as well as a phone for the disabled daughter.**

**Arevik is happy that her dream came true. She is grateful to the AMAA, the sponsor, and all those who supported her and her daughters and found a house that they now call home.**

”

In Vartenis, the AMAA staff visits destitute families and lonely elderly to encourage, pray, support and provide much-needed help, such as to an elderly man who desperately needed a wood stove and wood to heat his home.

## Delight to the children

The post-war security situation and the enduring poverty have robbed the children of border communities of their childhood. Many suffer from boredom as there are no programs or playgrounds for them. The children of one small village begged the school principal to ignore COVID restrictions and start classes to keep them busy.

Indifference is not an option.

Delighting these beautiful children is no different than delighting Jesus. We do our utmost to savor their laughter, excitement and delight through Christmas Joy programs, gifts from the "American Santa" (see story on page 8), Easter hope, puppet shows, clowns and more - all enveloped in a program of games, songs, sketches and more.

“

### **Arevik's Dream Comes True She and Her Daughters Receive a New Home**

**Arevik Arakelyan has attended the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Berd since 2012 and today benefits from the AMAA's Soup Kitchen. She is a single woman with two adult daughters, one of whom is disabled, and lives in a rented and dilapidated house. She receives no support.**

**On July 5, 2021, while in Armenia, Aram Bashyan from the United States visited the Berd Soup Kitchen, where he met Arevik. Along with one of AMAA's Berd staff members,**

“

### **"Hello" and "Thank You" from Armenia to America!**

*The AMAA places beautiful smiles on about 12,000 children's faces every year throughout Armenia and Artsakh with Christmas gifts, festivities and the message of God's love.*

*The Good News of Christmas also reached Noravan, Shaghat and many other border villages in Armenia in 2021.*

*There are high spirits, music and of course, gifts.*

*After staging the Christmas story, the children scurry around in the hallway, waiting their turn to receive their presents.*

*One of the children, who knows us, asks: "Did Santa send these gifts to us from America?"*

*When he hears the answer, he eagerly runs back to his friends, screaming: "Hey, guys, our gifts came from America!" But then, as if he forgot something, he comes back to us.*

*"Oh gosh, I forgot, then, do you think you could send America back a 'thank you?'" and adds "you may as well throw in a 'hello' from us."*

*Many "hellos" and "thank yous" from Armenia to America!*

”

In addition to toys, many children receive Children's Bibles to educate and instruct them.

“

### **Children's Bibles To comfort, instruct and guide**

*For millennia, the Bible has been a powerful source of comfort, instruction and guidance. Times have changed but the power of the Bible has not.*

*The AMAA has distributed 1,000 Children's Bibles in border villages across Armenia and Artsakh. The distribution is often done in a gathering where the Bible is introduced and its role and power in their lives explained.*

*One of these events took place on August 4, 2021 when the AMAA distributed children's Bibles in the border village of Shake near Sisian. Representatives of the Armenian Bible Society and the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft (German Bible Society) were present at the event that took place at the local school.*

”

## **Development**

The approach offered to each village is tailored to the needs of the given community and is formed with active community participation.

We gather the youth and challenge them to form a Youth Club to mobilize them, brainstorm, join forces and devise development programs that include capacity building and income generation. We encourage them to work together and use the villages' resources to improve their lives. We challenge them to be confident and put their creativity to work and make things happen. The locals are moved into action. We act as the catalyst providing advice and resources. The plan calls for the formation of Youth Clubs in 17 villages near Kapan, Vartenis, Sisian, Goris, Noyemberian and Berd.



*Children receive Bibles in border villages.*

A collateral benefit of this program is the creation of community spirit bringing the youth together.

In Tretouk near Vartenis we helped form a Youth Club that facilitates the acquisition of vocational training and the tools necessary to start small businesses. The women of the village proved to be most active and industrious.

In the Sisian village of Njdeh, the AMAA helped a woman named Marieta learn manicuring, acquire the necessary tools and supplies and start her small business. Village weddings are her busiest times. She now is earning an income and will soon help support the community.

The most powerful effect of this 3-fold approach is the ripple effect that it creates in the community. The AMAA acts as a catalyst that stirs residents, local governments and other entities into action. Our actions act like seeds being sown which God grows into large plants. Our experience in Choratan and more recently in Njdeh attest to this.

“

### **She Got on Her Feet and Said, "Life Must Go on"**

*Marieta couldn't stop thinking about the time she met with AMAA workers, and received an offer to help her get trained and start her own business.*



*Christmas gifts to border village children.*



*It was like she got on her feet that day, saying to herself, "life must go on" and headed right to the Sisian AMAA office.*

*The AMAA gave a hand, touching the life of Marieta, a Njdeh community resident who had been deprived of nearly every opportunity in life. With the AMAA's financial help, she was trained as a manicurist and used her hands to start her own business. Marieta says that now, not only can she protect her family's well-being, she'll be able to help her community in the future.*

*Now, more than ever, Marieta is standing strong on the land of her ancestors, and she's not ready to let go.*



Marieta Hairabedian starts her own business with the AMAA's support.

Most important, we are thankful to God when these often-overlooked villagers express their profound appreciation for our personalized attention and care, which they consider far more precious than the aid that we bring.

*For some folks, what we do is huge. For others, it's very little. But for us, it's just about being there, alongside our people.*

”

## What Motivates Us

Working in these remote communities is challenging. There are treacherous roads, and the poor facilities often lack resources.

Yet, we are delighted at the unleashed creativity, and the ensuing fruit of our labor. It's incredibly refreshing to see dispirited youth, newly armed with enthusiasm, learning new trades and earning income.

We smile with a profound sense of gratitude at the laughter and joy of children surprised by the programs and the gifts.

We feel that our mission is accomplished as the villagers feel empowered and determined to stay put and contribute to the development of their communities.

## The Future

*We appreciate that our Homeland starts from the border. First and foremost is a nation's security, which requires impenetrable borders. But borders are only strong, and soldiers only stand firm, when at their back are developed villages. So, side by side and at the back of every village stand those of us with the AMAA. We'll spare no effort. We'll keep on supporting the villages, no matter what.*



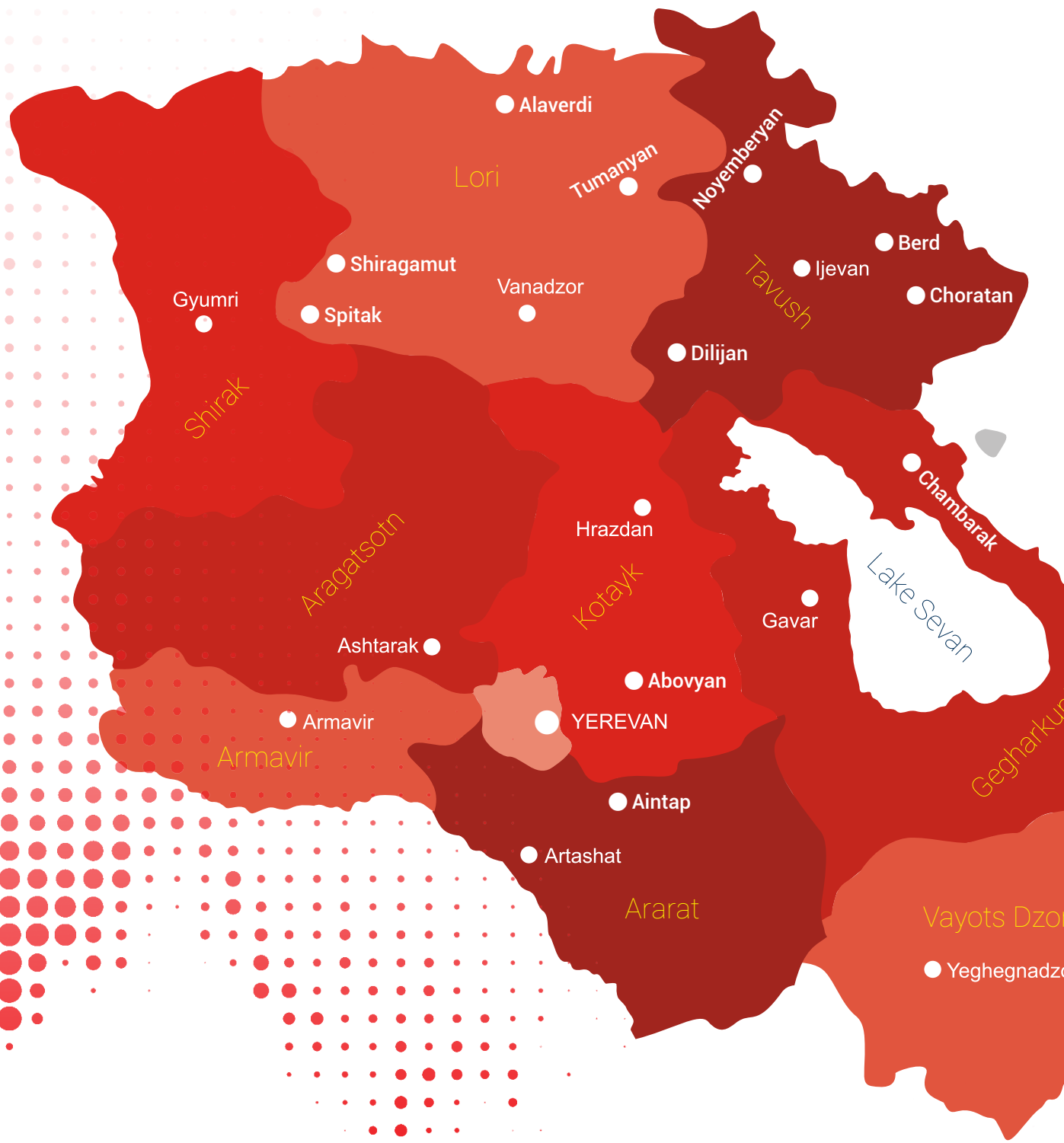
**\*Harout Nercessian** is the AMAA Representative in Armenia.



**\*Lusine Ohanyan** is the AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator. She coordinates the Border Village program which is her brainchild.



Children in Njdeh receive gifts.



## Map of Armenia and Artsakh





## Since the Artsakh War, AMAA has been in 95 Border Villages in Armenia and Artsakh

### 1. Syunik Province - 31 villages

- Goris 17
- Sisian 7
- Kapan 7

### 2. Tavush Province - 8 villages

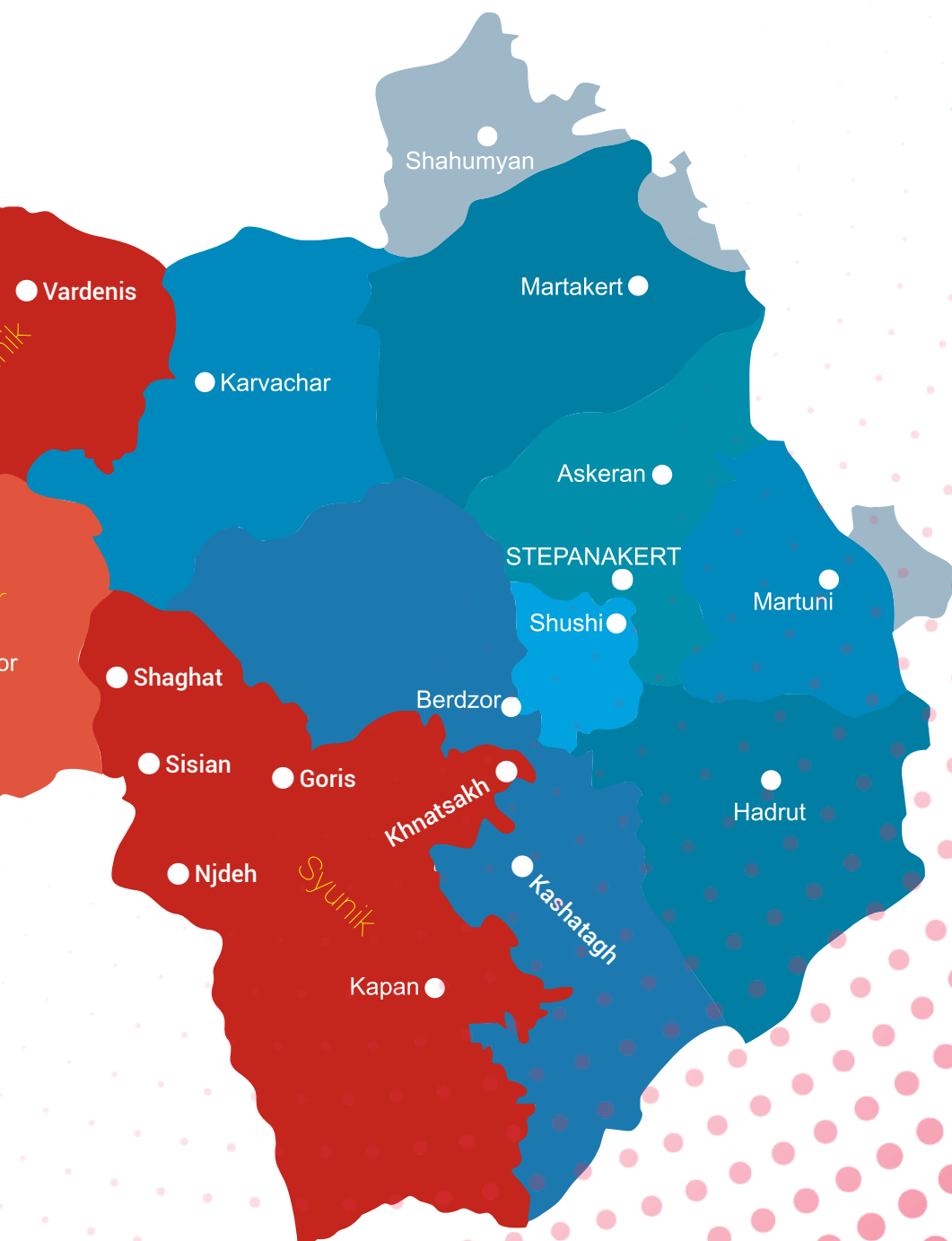
- Noyemberyan 5
- Berd 3

### 3. Gegharkunik Province - 23 villages

- Chambarak 2
- Vardenis 21

### 4. Artsakh - 33 villages

- Askeran 16
- Martakert 8
- Martuni 6
- Kashatagh 3





# Deeds and Prayers Against the Will of the Enemy

By **Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator

*The existence of border villages is proof that the enemy exists – they are very close, in some places only a few meters away. In reality their presence is not on the border, but on Armenian lands.*

*The will of the enemy intends to suppress the Armenian spirit with its presence, forcing Armenians to leave their sacred land and their homes. But deep disappointment awaits them.*

*Armenians not only continue to live on their land, but also continue to develop and improve their lives. We at the AMAA in turn ensure our presence through our programs keeping the Armenian gates stable.*

*It is difficult to attribute the implementation of the border villages programs only to the AMAA. It is more correct to say that the blessing belongs to the Armenian Evangelical Community and to the inseparable cooperation between the AMAA and the Church. The implementation is also based on the Church Pastor, Christian Education workers, volunteers and devotees.*

*Village-to-village visits are not just for material support but are soul-strengthening prayers against the will of the enemy that for centuries wants to see Armenia without Armenians. What they don't realize is that Armenians and Armenia are inseparable, where land, air and water keep their vitality and purity, with 1,700 years of incessant prayers, where bombs fall on the holy ground and do not explode, where the soil is fertile only at the feet of Armenians.*

*The AMAA has become a BIG FAMILY together with the border villages, where the Association employees are always eagerly awaited and welcomed with great joy.*





## AMAA Center in Sisian

Due to the unresolved post-war situation, on October 16, 2021, two more villages of Sisian – Noravan and Ishkhanasar – became border villages. There are already seven villages bordering Nakhijevan: Aris, Tasik, Sarvard, Nzhdeh, Tsghuni, Tanahat, Mutsk and Shaghat. All these villages are at the AMAA's center of attention.

The devotees of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Sisian adopted a new principle which is to devote themselves to the strengthening, prosperity and implementation of programs in the border villages of Sisian.

For example we witnessed the results of the 3-day camps for the children during our last visit to Tasik village, when little Mane was walking down the street and started singing the song "I honor your name, King." Another result is Shaghat village starting a Sunday service for Christian education.

Pastor Arman Martirosyan and his wife Saida's unwavering approach to serve God has unconditionally changed the mood of border communities near Sisian. They personally go from village to village, taking with them the love of God and the Homeland. They go from village to village and house to house, and they are not tired. They know everyone, from children to the adults. Entering the village one can hear the villager's voices, "Brother Arman, are you coming to our house?" The most beautiful scene is villagers waiting in their front yards full of joy and hope.

## AMAA Center in Goris

"Are you all ready? Have we forgotten anything? We are leaving at exactly 9 o'clock," Rev. Sargis' voice is heard while he walks around the office, rearranging everything with his eyes.

Rev. Sargis has personally arranged the gifts in advance with his wife Armine, paying attention to every detail so that everything will be as he likes without any deviations.

It's 8:45 a.m. Before leaving, Rev. Sargis gathers everyone around him, prays and gives thanks to God and asks for His blessings.

We leave for the villages of Togh, Aravus, Kornidzor, Karashen, Khnatsakh, Vaghatur and Khoznavar taking the blessings we received to the Armenian borders and knowing for sure that after our visit a new reality of miracles will start in the village.

## AMAA Center in Vardenis

Among our devotees are Armen Movsesyan and his wife Lyuba, for whom not only Vardenis, but also the border villages are in their field of service. They live with everyone's worries and joy.

Armen and Lyuba do not forget the 80th birthday of Norabak's lonely grandmother Sveta or to bring a wood stove and wood to Geghamabak's grandfather Gennady. His house had burned down, and the breath of the approaching winter could have been irreversible without that love and warmth.



*Pastor Arman Martirosyan (front middle) and his wife Saida (back middle) with children from Shaghat village.*



Once a month, up to 60 children from the border villages of Kutakan, Tretuk and Shatvan are brought to the Vardenis Center. They are children who are deprived of everything; they do nothing but hard rural work. There are no libraries, clubs, or playgrounds in the villages; there are no clubs of any kind. The daily life of the children is quite full at the AMAA Center. The children spend 4-5 hours at the Center filled with entertainment and learning topics, such as caring, culture, patriotism and life skills. They also make crafts and play interesting games. Before returning to the village, the children start counting the days until the next visit.

One can witness the results of their devotion and service when they hear village parents talking about their families praying with their children and reading the Bible together at home in the evenings.

Armen and Lyuba are in this mission with their three children, who provide active communication during their visits with village children. ■



*Rev. Sargis Ochinyan prepares for a visit to border villages.*



*Armen Movsesyan and his wife Lyuba (right) with the children of Kut Village in Syunik Province.*





AMAA Representative in Artsakh Viktor Karapetyan (second from left) and Pastor Khachatur Khachatryan (back row middle) of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Stepanakert with children of Nor Ghznchi, a border village in Artsakh.

## Tireless Mission

## Անհողնում Առաքելութիւն

By **Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator

**A**rtsakh is part of every Armenian's heart, the cradle of an Armenian. Wherever you are in Artsakh, in Armenia or in other parts of the world, every Armenian taken captive to Ararat, a nation that has migrated around the world, is soothed by the liberated Artsakh, our mountainous Homeland. The enemy's goal in the 2020 war was to evict Armenians from the Artsakh world. But God's will was different for the Armenian and the Armenian house. Artsakh was wounded but stood firm.

Even during the 2020 war, the AMAA did not cease its services in Artsakh. And, after the war, it increased its programs, reaffirming its unconditional devotion to the Homeland, taking on its shoulders the pain of the Homeland and the Armenians and the unchanging, tireless mission to get them back on their feet.

The AMAA is strong with the people who carry out its mission. They are the ones who carry within them the impeccable spirit, the light through which you recognize the Association.



*One of those dedicated people is Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Representative in Artsakh, who during the 44-day war went from shelter to shelter, from house to house, from border to border, bringing with him everything the people and the military needed: food, household items, faith and hope for the future. How much courage and strength of spirit must a person like Viktor have to run to the hospital part of the day, then go to bid the last farewell to a departed compatriot, and then as if nothing had happened, continue his mission, fighting face to face for tomorrow?*

*And tomorrow will definitely come, as long as there are mission minded people and organizations such as the AMAA that operate today for the sake of tomorrow.*

*Below and on the following pages, we present a few short stories (in English and Armenian) from the border villages which have been a source of inspiration for the AMAA.*



## **We Want Peace, Nothing Else**

The day begins earlier than any other day. We have a long journey to the border.

There was a time when this same journey seemed almost unending and exhausting, but now the distances are no longer so far.

We reach a village. Not even a few minutes have slipped by, when, already, all the residents, from the oldest senior to the smallest child, have crowded around us. The noise from our car has created an uproar, sounding the alarm that there's a guest in Njdeh village.

We start with the most important things, greeting one another, as we begin talking about life events. There's laughter, joking, but then, suddenly, a nagging question starts to ring in everyone's head.

What is one thing you want to have the most? We want peace, nothing else!

The sounds of laughter cease, the smiles freeze on every face, and, in the eerie silence, you start praying, voicelessly, in your head, asking yourself, "Why couldn't we understand the price of peace?" All the while, you can't stop thinking, "Are our prayers too late?"

But no, prayers are never too late.

**Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia  
External Relations Coordinator

*Lusine Ohanyan with children from Njdeh Village.*





# The Teacher of Artsakh

Many times, in the context of our village visits, the AMAA office in Artsakh has reflected on the agony our people suffer while living in the border regions. We hear about and see firsthand their day-to-day routines and worries, as well as the tasks they've completed. During these visits, we've been witness to such heroic deeds, to such examples of courage and perseverance, that we're ready to do anything just to give even a little joy, some hope or a smile, to those living there, old and young.

One radiant example would be Armine Vanyan, a resident of Shahmasur Village, in Artsakh's Martakert region. We first met her as part of our village visit program in July 2021. The village had been repopulated after Artsakh's 44-Day War, with visits and social aid being of utmost importance.

We were impressed by our meeting with 13-year-old Armine, who stands out with her sense of purpose, strong-featured like most Armenian girls. She heads to school with a sure stride, where she sees her destiny as a teacher. It has been an honor to meet an Armenian young lady of this caliber, who has already made up her mind to open her own school someday. She's already teaching her first students at home — her two sisters!

Two days after recording her wish, with support from AMAA benefactor Bryan Bedrosian, Armine's dream school opened, loaded with whiteboards, along with much-needed educational supplies, and, most important of all, textbooks. True to her word, she started energetically instructing her sisters that very day, promising she'd expand in the future and teach kids from other villages, too.

Armine's happiness and first great milestone on her road to teaching caused her indescribable joy and delight, which she shared many times on the phone and in messages. That's how much she kept trying to express her gratitude to our team and to Mr. Bedrosian. She says that she's perused the books she got and is continuing her mission with strong devotion.

Armine and many kids like her, who live, dream, and keep Artsakh's border safe, are the source of our hope and assurance of our faith in every coming day.

There's no way to describe the vast array and geographic coverage of AMAA's work; where there is room for thousands of little children, including Artsakh's little teacher Armine.



*Elina Gasparyan*, AMAA Artsakh Administrative Assistant

## Խաղաղություն ենք ուզում, ուրիշ ոչինչ

Օրն սկսվում է ավելի վաղ, քան մյուս օրերը: Երկար ճանապարհի ունենք դեպի սահման: Ժամանակ կար, որ այդ նույն ճանապարհը թվում էր անվերջանալի ու հոգնեցնող, իսկ հիմա հեռուներն այլևս այնքան էլ հեռու չեն:

Հասնում ենք Սիսյանի մօտ Նժդեհ գյուղ, չանցած մի քանի րոպե՝ արդեն գյուղի բնակչության մեծ մասը մեծից փոքր հավաքված են շուրջոյ: Մեքենայի ձայնն է խառնել բոլորին՝ ազդակ հնչեցնելով, որ գյուղում հյուր ունեն:

Սկսում ենք ամենակարեւորից – ողջագուրվում ենք եւ սկսում խոսել կյանքի անցուղարձից:

Ծիծաղում ենք, կատակներ անում, եւ հանկարծ հնչում է մի հարց.

- Ի՞նչ կուզեիք ունենալ գյուղում, որ չունեք:

- Խաղաղություն ենք ուզում, ուրիշ ոչինչ:

Լռում են ծիծաղի ձայները, ժպիտները սառչում են բոլորի շուրթերին, եւ լռության մեջ մտովի անձայն աղոթքում ես ու մտածում ինչու չէինք հասկանում խաղաղության գինը եւ արդյոք ուշացած չեն աղոթքներս:

Զե՛, աղոթքները երբեք ուշացած չեն լինում:

**Լուսինե Օհանյան**, ԱՀԱԸ Հայաստանի Մասնաճյուղի Արտաքին Կապերի Պատասխանատու





## Let the Enemy see that we're dressed well, Let the Enemy see that we aren't afraid

When the 44-Day War ended, the village of Khenazakh was the first to face serious challenges. Khenazakh was first to resist the enemy when they tried to enter village limits. Everybody was talking about how the villagers negotiated with the Azeri General approaching their homes.

The daily news of turmoil propelled the AMAA to reach out to the people of Khenazakh.

AMAA's Goris team prepared a beautiful Christmas event, wrapped presents, and went down to the village. All-in-all, it was just a few hours, and war-hardened hearts started warming up, as if they were under the winter sun. The periodic visits coincided with the soccer games of the local children's soccer team.

Later, at the AMAA's request, missionary soccer coach Ruben Zarosyan came to the village for two days and coached the team, along with all the other village children who had gathered to be part of this unprecedented soccer mania. After every game, we read passages from the children's Bible, and prayed for the peace of the country and the children's spirits were lifted.

For a long time, we looked at these children, who, involved in their game, were fearlessly oblivious to the Azeri soldiers under whose direct gaze they were playing. These children are testament to the type of Armenian who will never be brought to their knees.

After the soccer match, looking to rally them up, we asked the children a traditional question concerning their wishes.

Our future soldiers answered, resounding stronger than anybody could have expected: "Bring us soccer uniforms, so the enemy can see we're dressed well, so the enemy can see we're not afraid."

**Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator



## Let the Enemy Hear Our Prayers

The Village of Shosh is located near the Shushi rock, where lies the town of Shushi. The "rock" is prominent in Armenian history as it was from there that Armenian fighters ambushed the Azeri military who were held in Shushi during the first Nagorno-Karabakh War. Today, the Azeri military, their flag and the historic Ghazanchetsots Cathedral are all clearly visible from Shosh Village. The historic Cathedral has been closed for decades.

In response to the Muslim call of prayer that is regularly and loudly heard in the Village, the AMAA installed a sound system in the Cathedral. Two powerful speakers, placed outside and facing Shushi, now blast the Sunday worship service throughout the village and in the direction of Azeri soldiers.

This initiative has triggered the villagers' interest in the Cathedral where regular Sunday Mass recently began to be offered following an initial cleanup and full renovation sponsored by benefactors.

Acting as a catalyst to unleash untapped potential is the most effective way of bringing about change.

**Elina Gasparyan**,  
AMAA Artsakh Administrative Assistant



## Քաջարի ու Յանդուզն Բերձորի և Աղավնոյի Յերուները

Այնտեղ՝ սահմանին կյանքն այլ գույներ ունի... ուրախությունը և երջանկությունը՝ այլ երանգներ...

Բերձոր և Աղավնո համայնքներում պատերազմից հետո մարդիկ փորձում են ոտքի կանգնել և պայքարել իրենց հողում ապրելու իրավունքի համար... Թեև դժվար, բայց հույսը և հավատը սրտերում պահելով, փորձում են իրենց երեխաներին երջանկացնել: Ամեն օրն ապրում են մյուս օրվա հանդեպ հույս տածելով: Երբեմն վախենում են, իսկ երբեմն համարձակ են այնքան, որ նույնիսկ թշնամու անցնող շարասյունը, որ չգիտես թե ինչ կարող է անել, նրանց չի վախեցնում: Նրանք այստեղ են՝ իրենց տանը, իրենց հողում ...

Անցած տարի պատերազմից հետո, երբ Բերձոր համայնքը դարձավ միջանցք թշնամու համար, ԱՀԱԸ-ն շտապեց միջոցներ ձեռնարկել, որպեսզի մարդիկ վերադառնան իրենց տները: 57 ընտանիք այժմ բնակվում են քաղաքում՝ անորոշության ու վտանգի մեջ, բայց գիտակցելով՝ այլ հայրենիք չկա ... Նրանք գիտակցում են՝ միայն վերադառնալը բավարար չէ, պետք է փորձել նորից ստեղծել, նորից ավերված Բերձորը շենացնել...

Բերձորի երեխաները հաճախում են Աղավնոյի դպրոց... Մեծից փոքրապրում են գիտակցելով՝ հայապահպանումը սկսվում է ինձանից, ես իմ հողի տերն եմ... Երբ խոսում ենք Բերձորի մասին, դժվար է չի իշխել փոքրիկ Մովսեսին՝ խարտյաշ, կանաչ ու թախծոտաչքերով, բայց միևնույն ժամանակ խորը և հասուն: Քչախոս Մովսեսը մի անգամ իր համեստությամբ հայտնվեց բոլորիս ուշադրության կենտրոնում: Նրա համար Բերձորից լավ տեղ չկա, իրեն հանգիստ ու երջանիկ է զգում, չնայած չի կարողանում առաջվա պես քաղաքով մեկ վազվզել, խաղալ: Ընկերներ շատ քիչ ունի, դրա համար տարածքից հավաքել է ինչ կարողացել է և իր համար խաղալիքներ պատրաստել: Բազմազավակ ընտանիքը, որն 8 երեխա ունի, կենսական տարբեր կարիքներ էլ ունի: ԱՀԱԸ-ն փորձում է նրանց և նման բազմաթիվ ընտանիքների աջակցել՝ այցելելով, օգնելով, թե՛ նյութապես, թե՛ բարոյապես: Այնտեղ նաև բուժկետ վերաբացվեց և անհրաժեշտ դեղորայքներ, խնամքի պարագաներ՝ սպիտակեղեն, սնունդ, հագուստ տրամադրվեց: Կազմակերպությունը ժամկետային է, որպեսզի քաղաքում որոշ ընտանիքներ կարողանան հոգալ իրենց կարիքները՝ իրականացնելով թխվածքաբլիթների և այլ խմորեղենների պատրաստում և վաճառք:

ԱՀԱԸ-ն լույս է տանում և հույս ստանում, միսթարանք տանում և խոստում ստանում, որ Արցախը կա, քանի կան Մովսեսն ու նրա նման սահմանապահները: Մովսեսին և նրա եղբայրներին նայելով ակամայից հիշում եմ Մոնթեի խոսքերը՝

<< Ադրբեջանի կառավարությունը հաստատ որոշել է հայերին վտարել, հետևաբար՝ դիմադրելուց բացի այլընտրանք չկա: Մենք իրավունք չունենք այս անգամ էլ պարտվելու: Մենք պետք է հաղթենք>>..

Նրանք այստեղ են՝ Արցախում, իրենց տանը ... Եվ միասին՝ ազգովի մենք չենք պարտվում, չենք հանձնվում, չենք պատրաստվում հանձնվել և թույլ տալ որ մեզ վտարեն... մենք կառուցում ենք մեր երազանքների Արցախը՝ ԱՀԱԸ-ի հետ...



**Էլինա Գասպարյան,** ԱՀԱԸ Արցախի Մասնաճյուղի գործավար



Berdzor, a border village in Artsakh.



## Քարը քարին դնելով՝ կառուցելու ենք մեր հայրենիքը



Կառուցելու ենք մեր երազանքների հայրենիքը, կառուցելու ենք՝ ամեն օր, ամեն վայրկյան, կառուցելու ենք՝ արդար ձեռքերով ու զորաց քարերով, կառուցելու ենք՝ քարը քարին դնելով:

Նժդեհ գյուղի խաղահրապարակը անկյունաքարերից մեկն է, որ դրվեց Ամերիկայի Հայ Ավետարանչական ընկերակցության ջանքերով:

Բացմանը ներկա էին Նժդեհ և Ցղունի համայնքների բնակիչները և ինչպես իրենք էին պնդում, խաղահրապարակը կառուցվել է 2 գյուղերի միջանկյալ գոտում և այն հավասարապես ծառայելու է երկու գյուղերի երեխաներին:

Օրը հիշարժան դարձրեց երեխաներից մեկի խոսքերը, ով նստած էր ճոճանակին՝ գեղեցիկ սպիտակ տոնական զգեստով, և գոչում էր.

- Հասկացա՛, աշխարհում ճոճանակից ավելի լավ բան չկա՛:

Անկեղծ այս խոսքերը միայն թերևս արժեին այն բոլոր ջանքերը, որը դրվեցին ընտրակցության կողմից՝ իրականություն դարձնելու մանկության մի երազանք:

**Լուսինե Օհանյան**, ԱՀԱԸ Հայաստանի Մասնաճյուղի Արտաքին Կապերի Պատասխանատու

## Life is the Price of Living on the Border

Nowadays, having a job is all you need to make a living, except on the border. On the border, you can go ahead and work your fingers to the bone, and it will not make a difference whether you live to see another day.

Everyone living at the border are mature people, even the children.

Why do our children have to run for shelter, instead of running around in the backyard, like normal children, without a care in the world?

Life on the border is lived with great difficulty, but people keep living. They are not complaining about their tough lives; instead, they just keep being brave and ready to support others.

No one living at the border dreams about money, getting a high-paying job, a fancy car, or living in a mansion. Each person living at the border just dreams about peace.

## Կյանքը Սահմանին Տրվում Է Կյանքի Գնով

Այսօր եթե աշխատանք ունես, ապա կարող ես ապրել, բայց ոչ սահմանին,,,,, սահմանին էլ կարող ես քրտնաջան աշխատես, սակայն տարբերությունն այն է, որ չգիտես կապրես, թե կգոհվես....

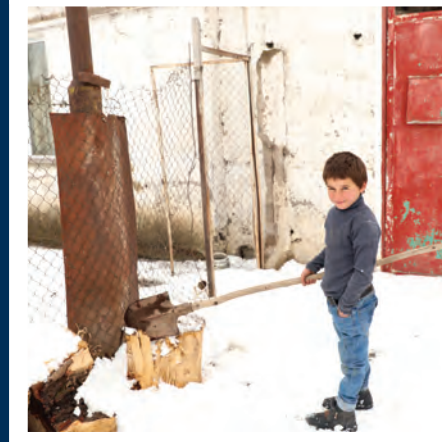
Սահմանին ապրողները բոլորը հասուն մեծ մարդիկ են, նույնիսկ երեխաները :

Ինչու մեր երեխաները բակում վազվզելու և անհոգ մանկության փոխարեն, պետք է վազեն դեպի թաքստոցները...

Շատ դժվար է տրվում կյանքը սահմանին, բայց մարդիկ շարունակում են ապրել և չեն էլ դժգոհում իրենց դժվար կյանքից, հակառակը՝ խիզախ են ու պատրաստակամ մյուսներին աջակցելու:

Սահմանին բնակվող յուրաքանչյուր մարդու երազանքը ոչ փողն է, ոչ պաշտոնը, ոչ ավտոմեքենան ու ոչ էլ դոյակ ունենալը. սահմանին ուրաքանչյուր մարդ երազում է խաղաղության մասին:

**Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator  
**Լուսինե Օհանյան**, ԱՀԱԸ Հայաստանի Մասնաճյուղի Արտաքին Կապերի Պատասխանատու



## We Shall Build Brick by Brick

We'll build the Homeland of our dreams. Yes, we'll build it — every day, every second, we'll work to build it up, building with righteous hands and hard stones. Indeed, build we will — brick by brick.

The playground in Njdeh village is but one of many cornerstones put in place by the efforts of the AMAA.

Residents from the communities of Njdeh and Tsghuni were present at the opening ceremony for the playground. As they had insisted, the playground is now located in an intermediary zone, which will equally serve children from both villages.

Cries of joy from one small child, clad in a beautiful, white Christmas dress, enjoying the swing set, made this day unforgettable. "At this moment, I understand that nothing in the entire world is better than a swing set."

Frankly, just hearing these cries of joy alone would make all the AMAA's challenging work of fulfilling children's dreams worth it.

**Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator



## No Job Too Big or Too Small

We are the AMAA — rich with 103 years of experience and steadfast in our values.

There's no job too big or too small for us. We simply have our mission: being at the side of all Armenians, while picking them up and setting them on their feet through hope, love and faith.

Here at the AMAA, our work is not just a job. It's our faithful service to the Homeland.

Among our devoted staff are Armen and Lyuba, whose presence in Vardenis inspires a feeling of safety, even though there are still many things left to do.

Armen and Lyuba will never forget Grandma Sveta of Norabik village, and this lonely, elderly lady's 80-year birthday.

But from now on, Grandma Sveta will never be alone again....because we, the AMAA, are at her side.

**THANKS TO THE GREATEST ORGANIZATION WITH THE GREATEST STAFF!**



*Lyuba celebrates Grandma Sveta's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.*

## Չկան Մեծ ու Փոքր Գործեր

Մենք Ավետարանչական ընկերակցությունն ենք՝ 103 տարվա հարուստ փորձով և մնայուն արժեքներով: Մեզ համար չկան մեծ ու փոքր գործեր, մեզ համար կա առաքելություն լինելու հայ մարդու կողքին, ոտքի կանգնեցնելու հային՝ հույսով սիրով և հավատքով:

Ընկերակցության մեջ աշխատելը թերևս ոչ այնքան աշխատանք է, որքան նվիրյալ ծառայություն հայրենիքին:

Այդ նվիրյալներից են Արմենը և Լյուբան, ում ներկայությունը #Վարդենիսում ապահովության զգացողություն է ներշնչում, որ դեռ շատ անելիքներ կան:

Արմենն ու Լյուբան, ովքեր չեն մոռանում նույնիսկ #Նորաբակի միայնակ Սվետա տատիկի 80 ամյակը:

Սվետա տատիկը այսուհետ միայնակ չի .....նրա կողքին մենք ենք՝ Ավետարանչական ընկերակցությունը:

**ՇՆՈՐՀԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԱՄԵՆԱԼԱԿ ԿԱԶՄԱԿԵՐՊՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ՝  
ԱՄԵՆԱԼԱԿ ԱԾԽԱՏԱԿԱԶՄՈՎ!**

**Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator  
**Լուսինե Օհանյան**, ԱՅԱԸ Հայաստանի Մասնաճյուղի Արտաքին Կապերի Պատասխանատու



*AMAA's Viktor Karapetyan and Harout Nercessian deliver relief to needy families in Dahrav, a border village in Artsakh.*



## AMAA at Dahrav Village in Artsakh

Each village in Artsakh is unique. Every village has its own, distinct code of conduct, body language and traditions. Yet distinguishing traits found in every Armenian still come through in each person: industrious, deep roots in the land, willing to live alongside every kind of disaster, grateful to the core. Here, everybody wears their worth, and wears it undauntedly, even through life's cruel and most somber days.

The AMAA is implementing a lot of social and humanitarian programs in Dahrav Village, ranging from supplying clothing and food to fulfilling spiritual needs, along with holding Christmas celebrations and visiting homes. Every visit reflects empathy, taking a share in the grief and hardship, while doubling the joy. More effective than any material aid is the word of consolation, when said in the right place at the right time, being attentive and compassionate for people's plight. Harout Nercessian and Lusine Ohanyan accompanied the Artsakh team on one of their routine visits, when the village leader said, **"Your presence is so much more important than these gifts and assistance."**

Can a heart ever possess more gratitude than these words express? No, there are no greater words of thanks.

The AMAA continues its humanitarian programs in Dahrav and other villages.

We'll lift our Homeland onto its feet, with faith and acts of faith, helping one another, empathizing for one another- we've united and raised our fists in solidarity. Again and again, we keep on giving open-handedly and helping, empathizing with an open heart. Let's construct and create the community and Homeland of our dreams.



### «Այս նվերներից և օգնությունից ավելի ձեր ներկայությունն է կարևոր»...

Արցախի ամեն մի գյուղ յուրահատուկ է իր բարքերով, նիստ ու կացով, ավանդույթներով, բայց հային բնորոշ առանձնահատկությունները երևելի են յուրաքանչյուրի մեջ՝ աշխատասիրությամբ, կուռ և հողին արմատացած լինելը, համառությունը, բոլոր առհավիրքներին զուգահեռ ապրելու ցանկությունը, շնորհակալ սիրտը: Այստեղ յուրաքանչյուրը արժեք կրող է, անսասան կրող՝ չնայած կյանքի դաժանություններին ու ծանր օրերին:

Դահրավ գյուղում ԱՀԱԸ իրականացնում է բազմաթիվ սոցիալական և մարդասիրական ծրագրեր՝ սկսած հագուստի և սննդի տրամադրումից մինչև հովանավորություն, Սուրբ Ծննդյան միջոցառումներ և տնայցեր: Յուրաքանչյուր այց ապրումնակցում է, վշտի ու դժվարության կիսում, ուրախության կրկնապատկում: Նյութականից առավել է երբեմն տեղին ասված միսիթարական խոսքը, ուշադիր լսելը, կարեկցելը վիճակին: Հերթական մի այցի ժամանակ, որին ներկա էին նաև Հարութ Ներսեսյանը և Լուսինե Օհանյանը, գյուղապետը հետևյալն ասաց.

**«Այս նվերներից և օգնությունից ավելի ձեր ներկայությունն է կարևոր»...**

Միթե սիրտը կարող է ավելի շնորհակալ լինել, քան այսպիսի դրսևորումը: Ո՛չ, արժևորման ավելի մեծ խոսքեր չկան...

ԱՀԱԸ-ն շարունակում է մարդասիրական իր ծրագրերը Դահրավում և այլ գյուղերում:

Մենք հավատքով ու հավատքի գործերով ուղի կկանգնեցնենք մեր հայրենիքը՝ իրար օգնելով, ապրումնակցելով, իրար հետ՝ միասնական ու բռունցքված... շատ անգամ բաց ձեռքով՝ տալով, աջակցելով, բաց սրտով՝ ապրումնակցելով... շենացնենք ու ստեղծենք մեր երազանքների համայնքն ու հայրենիքը:

**Elina Gasparyan**, AMAA Artsakh Administrative Assistant  
**Էլինա Գասպարյան**, ԱՀԱԸ Արցախի Մասնաճյուղի Գործավար



AMAA's Viktor Karapetyan and Harout Nercessian in Dahrav, a border village in Artsakh.

## "You will come again, won't you?"

The AMAA's Border Village Program began eight years ago when the enemy's fire moved from the border to the village.

Shots were heard not only in the village, but also in our hearts. And thus, the AMAA team moved its efforts to the border villages.

It is difficult to set boundaries for AMAA's missionary activities. The AMAA is everywhere, even in places where it has no centers or major programs. We are there, where our presence is most needed. The Homeland invites us to remote villages where people live in extremely difficult conditions, but with the typical Armenian determination and faith in the future.

We take interesting and fun games, educational performances, colorful toys and clothes to the villages, but most of all, we take love and warmth with us.

For a moment, you notice the children hug the gift toys so tightly that you inadvertently see it is not just a toy, but the happy, un-lived childhood that looks at you with its narrow eyes and thanks you for coming again.

No matter how far we must travel to a remote village in Armenia, no matter how hard life is, there is a beautiful feeling that we are home.

Our visits to the villages are endless, and each visit turns into a promise that we will definitely come back.

### «Էլի Կգաք, ՉԷ՞»

Ամերիկայի Հայ Ավետարանչական ընկերակցության (AMAA) սահմանամերձ գյուղերի ծրագիրն սկսվեց 8 տարի առաջ, երբ թշնամու կրակոցը սահմանագոտուց տեղափոխվեց գյուղ:

Կրակոց հնչեց ոչ միայն գյուղում, այլև մեր սրտերում, և Ընկերակցության թիմը շարժվեց դեպի գյուղեր:

Ավետարանչականի գործունեության համար դժվար է սահմաններ որոշել: AMAA-ն ամենուր է, նույնիսկ այն վայրերում, որտեղ չունի գրասենյակներ և հիմնական ծրագրեր: Մենք այնտեղ ենք, ուր մեր ներկայությունն առավել անհրաժեշտ է: Հայրենիքը կանչում է մեզ դեպի հեռավոր գյուղեր, որտեղ մարդիկ ապրում են ծայրահեղ ծանր պայմաններում, բայց ապրում են հային բնորոշ հաստատակամությամբ և հավատով ապագայի նկատմամբ:

Մեզ հետ գյուղեր ենք տանում հետաքրքիր զվարճալի խաղեր, դաստիարակչական ներկայացումներ, գունագեղ խաղալիքներ, հագուստներ, բայց ամենակարևորը մեզ հետ տանում ենք սեր ու ջերմություն:

Մի պահ նկատում ես, որ երեխաները այնքան ամուր են գրկել նվեր-խաղալիքները, որ ակամայից տեսնում ես, որ դա պարզապես խաղալիք չէ, այլ դա այն երջանիկ, բայց չապրած մանկությունն է, որ իր վճիտ աչքերով նայում է քեզ ու իր շնորհակալությունը հայտնում՝ վերադառնալու համար:

Հայաստանի որ հեռավոր գյուղն էլ գնանք, որքան էլ դժվարություններ լինեն, որքան էլ կյանքը ծանր լինի, կա մի գեղեցիկ զգացողություն, որ մենք մեր տանն ենք:

Անվերջ են մեր այցելությունները գյուղեր, քանի որ ամեն անգամ դրանք վերածվում են խոստման, որ մենք անպայման կվերադառնանք:

**Lusine Ohanyan**, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator

**Լուսինե Օհանյան**, ԱՀԱԸ Հայաստանի Մասնաճյուղի Արտաքին Կապերի Պատասխանատու



Norshen, a border village in Artsakh.



# AMAA Constructs New Youth and Senior Center in Berd, Armenia

By Aren Deyirmenjian\*

In July 2020, just prior to the Artsakh war, a short-lived battle took place in the northern Tavush region between Armenia and Azerbaijan. A few kilometers south of the conflict zone is a town called Berd, which was recently named the central hub for the surrounding 17 villages. The area was and continues to be significant for the AMAA, thanks to the efforts of German missionary Sister Hanna Christen, who lived in and served Berd for seven years and received an Honorary Service Medal from the Government before retiring.

When the war ended, new instructions were added to construction licenses, signaling the mandatory requirement for underground shelters under buildings. Meanwhile, the AMAA was busy preparing architectural plans for the new Educational Day Center to be built in the town center which then had to be updated to fit the new regulations.

There was reason for panic and worry that what had happened was the first change in a long time but possibly wasn't going to be the last. Nevertheless, the AMAA kept going forward on the project with more resolve and determination than before. The idea was the same as in any other conflict zone: We will stand by the people and ensure

that these lands remain populated. If programs, education, food, aid and church services help convince people to stay, then we will make sure to do it – and we will do it *better* than before.

The new building – now under construction – will have a footprint of 200sqm and consist of two floors in addition to the basement. A state-of-the-art, modern architectural look will ensure the building is attractive and will remain an icon for the town for decades to come. The outdoor area will have terraced seating for events, as well as a sports field for recreational purposes. The first floor is provisioned to function as a Soup Kitchen for the elderly. The second floor, in cooperation with our long-term partner Mission Possible, will have three classrooms and a teacher's room, and will serve as an educational after-school day center.

The building will be used to boost the AMAA's activity in the area by becoming a hub for the youth and a space for the needy to



Sister Hanna Christen serves at the Berd Soup Kitchen in the early 2000s.

feel welcomed. Consequently, the spirit will come from the people of Berd, who will fill the walls with warmth, joy and excitement, ensuring that this area grows from strength to strength. ■



**\*Aren Deyirmenjian** is AMAA Deputy Representative in Armenia.



# Mercy and Grace

*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

**Hebrews 4:16**

By **Rev. Sargis Ochinyan\***

**W**hen I am asked "What has changed in you since the second Artsakh war?" my answer is "many things," but first and foremost has been my portrayal of the Lord's mercy and grace. For 28 years my life had been a life of repentance and accepting Jesus Christ as my savior, of which 4 years were for theological education and 15 years of pastoral service. The Lord's mercy and grace gained new meaning for me during the 44-day Artsakh war, and especially at the end of the war.

Sunday, September 27, 2020 started as an unusual day for me. Early in the morning, various friends and relatives called and asked if I was aware that a war had broken out. And they asked if my son Allen had called me. I later found out that they were all more informed and knew that the first blow of the war by the enemy was toward Shushi, where Allen was serving. And they knew that the wounded had already been brought to Goris, a border city in Armenia about 60 miles from Stepanakert, Artsakh, where I lived and served at the Evangelical Church of Armenia.

The Sunday Worship Service was also unusual. Our prayers and thoughts were about the war, and especially about our children who were serving. At first it seemed to me that this was another sabotage ("diversion") operation by the enemy, and that after a few hours everything would calm down. In the afternoon, when we saw how our anti-aircraft missiles in Goris rose to the sky with a rumble and read the news that the enemy had bombed the Artsakh capital Stepanakert and the city of Shushi, where my son was serving, everything changed. My wife and I returned to the Church, knelt down and could only pray one thing – "Lord, have mercy on your creatures and on me, a sinner. Have mercy on our soldiers and on Allen."

Then began the endless stream of refugees, who had to be taken care of, fed, and sheltered. The terrifying stories about the escalating war and our victims forced us to do just one thing – to pray. The news was getting worse day by day due to the advancement of the enemy. My son called once a day and spoke very briefly, trying to calm us down. We lived in the true sense of the word. After each call, I was praising God, and the next moment I was praying again.

It was October 8 or 9, when a friend from Gyumri asked me to visit the Goris morgue and, if possible, identify the body of his son, who had died during the first days of the war. What I witnessed there is impossible to express in words. Before that, I participated in the funerals of many soldiers, both relatives and children of my friends. I realized only one thing from all that, that no matter where you are in Artsakh, survival should have been equivalent to a miracle.

On October 19, the President of Artsakh made a speech on TV and announced that the enemy was a few kilometers away from Shushi. That news upset our already wounded and broken souls. During another short conversation with Allen, I heard an explosion over the phone, after which my son turned off the phone before the conversation was over. I thought I might never see my son again. But there was one thing I must cling to, and that was my only hope – the mercy and grace of the Lord. I had no right in asking the Lord to save the lives of Allen and the rest of our soldiers, but I could count on His mercy only by the grace of the Lord. Receiving a call again the next day and hearing my son say that everything was fine with him was a testimony to the mercy and grace of the Lord for me.

On October 22, my wife and I tested positive for COVID and were quarantined in our house for 14 days. Our life cut off from the world was summed up in 3 things – waiting for a call from our son, news, and unceasing prayer, night and day. "Lord, have mercy on our soldiers and on Allen." Until November 5, Allen stayed in Shushi with his platoon. On November 6, they were forced to leave their positions in order not to fall into the blockade. We learned about this many days after the end of the war. I also learned, of course, not from Allen but from his friends, how God had miraculously saved them and Allen from death many times, which seemed to be inevitable.

On December 16, I left for Stepanakert for a pastoral visit. I visited one of our friends who had called Allen to their house a week earlier so Allen could take a bath and wash his clothes. As I was about to leave, the wife approached me crying and handed me a bullet from a shotgun. In response to my surprised look, she said that during the washing, the bullet fell from the pocket of Allen's military jacket, where it was placed separately, it is clear for what purpose. She said she could not put the bullet in its place and now she was passing it on to me.

Now I carry that bullet in the pocket of my pastoral shirt so that I can always remember the mercy and grace of the Lord for us, so that I too can show grace and mercy to those who need it and so that I can always remember that my wife and I were no more than the thousand parents whose sons were killed during the war. "May the memory of the just be a blessing" (Յիշատակն արդարոց օրհնութեամբ եղիցի), and I bow to the parents of all the martyrs.

Why did the Lord save the life of our son and his friends, when death was all around? I do not have an answer. But I can only say that it is the mercy and grace of the Lord, for which I cannot stop thanking and praising Him. 🙏



**\* Rev. Sargis Ochinyan** is the Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Goris.

(Translated from Eastern Armenian by Louisa Janbazian)



# The Source of Our Personal Value



*Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you... Isaiah 43:4*

By **Harout Nercessian**, AMAA Representative in Armenia

Despite incredible achievements, many suffer deep inside from chronic low self-esteem and a strong sense of worthlessness. The driving force behind most of our words, actions and emotions is our attempt to feel important, worthy and significant. We spare no effort to fulfill our need for self-worth through personal achievements and in positively influencing others' opinions of us. These tactics are beneficial to some degree, but they do not provide lasting fulfillment.

On May 1, 2015, the *New York Times* published an article entitled "The Enduring Hunt for Personal Value." The author, Tony Schwartz, asserts, "We each want desperately to matter, to feel a sense of worthiness."

Schwartz reminds us of an athlete willingly enduring "brutal training regimens" in order to win medals, a businessperson relentlessly working to stack up more millions over their insane wealth, and politicians putting in 18-hour workdays in pursuit of high office they have no chance of winning.

Many adults like to brandish their designer clothes, watches, fancy cars and other status symbols, and social media provides a platform for them to do so. On Instagram, attractive people like to show off their looks, while others exaggeratedly brag about their accomplishments. Mark Zuckerberg laughs all the way to the bank by capitalizing on our need to be noticed. Facebook has created a platform where anyone can voice their opinion. It has produced countless "models," "political analysts," "medical experts," "psychologists" and "preachers." Social media thrives on our misguided aspirations to become online stars.

How about Christians?

We expect Christians to act differently. Yet, experience suggests otherwise. We have

all met preachers, church elders, Sunday school teachers, and organists who revel in their positions of power within the church. Pastors bask in their congregation sizes, Evangelists in the number of their converts. Some church leaders also succumb to the temptation to pursue full and permanent control of their churches through political maneuvering.

American pastor and theologian, Tim Keller, tells us of a serial womanizer whose personal value lay in his ability to entice women. Soon after conquering a woman's heart and body, he would abandon her in pursuit of his next prey in a repeated pattern of conquests and abandonments. After becoming a Christian, the man dropped all womanizing and adopted an active church life. The pastor found this to be extraordinary, until he noticed that the man was eager to dominate Bible studies and impose his views in church committees. He had replaced the conquest of women with the conquest of spiritual conversations and decisions. Jesus wants to profoundly transform us. But many self-proclaimed Christians settle for superficial change.

Do these efforts pay off?

Our yearning to feel good about ourselves and our thirst for praise, recognition and appreciation is God-given and is designed to build self-confidence, motivate us to work and create and enjoy the fruits of our labor.

Yet, our hunt for personal self-worth in human sources often leaves us disappointed, desolate and thirstier than ever. Our looks fade as we age; our achievements will eventually be surpassed by those of others. Many who have found personal value in their wealth have had to apply for bankruptcy. People whose applause we seek can fake their praise and pursue hidden agendas. The crowd that welcomed "king"

Jesus into Jerusalem with chants of "Hosanna..." soon switched sides and chanted "Crucify Him..."


Where can I find a reliable source of self-worth?

The answer is found in the Christian faith. God invites us to anchor our worthiness on two distinct, yet closely coupled divine sources.

God created humans in his image. He endowed us with unique qualities such as consciousness, creativity, language and freedom. As bearers of God's image, we are of infinite worth and are loved by Him. We are precious and worthy for God regardless of our attractiveness, skills, or accomplishments. This source of personal value is solid and lasting.

It is normal to enjoy human applause, praise and appreciation. There is no harm in feeling good about our accomplishments. These will reinforce our much-needed confidence and self-esteem. Yet, tying our self-worth to and being addicted to human sources of value is bound to eventually disappoint us. It can be detrimental to our faith and is a dismally poor substitute for divine sources of self-worth.

Having experienced the indescribably profound love of Christ, the Apostle Paul crucified his ego and instead of taking pride in his achievements he boasted in the Cross of Christ (Gal 6:14). Replacing the human sources of our personal self-worth with those of the divine is a sign that we have experienced the profound Christian transformation God intends for us.

At the end of our lives, when our beauty has faded, our wealth can no longer serve us, and our accomplishments have been outdone and long forgotten, believers in Christ can count on the unfading glory that God will bestow on them throughout eternity. Now that's genuine personal value. 

# Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France

(UEEAF - Union des Églises Evangéliques Arméniennes de France)

## *History at a Glance*



By Rev. Joël Mikaélian\*

**B**eginning in 1923, many Armenians took refuge in France, and a large number of Evangelicals were among them. In those days, Armenian immigrants faced hardships in a completely unfamiliar environment. On September 22, 1922, **Dr. Paul Berron** founded a mission called "Christian Mission in the East" (Action Chretienne en Orient) in the state of Alsace, and he played a caring role in the Armenian Evangelical Church in France to establish churches.

### MARSEILLE

Dr. Berron invited **Rev. Joseph Barsumian**, one of his relatives, to France. Arriving in France on March 21, 1924, Rev. Barsumian soon formed a group of believers, some of whom were already gathering in their homes for prayer meetings.

In the beginning, the worship services were held in one of the halls of the Salvation Army. On May 11, 1924, a Church Council was formed, followed by a Women's Committee for visits. At the time the community consisted of 71 families (226 people, 20 of whom were church members). After three months of activity, Rev. Barsumian was sent to Lyon, and was succeeded on May 19, 1924 by **Rev. Hovhannes Ghazarossian**, who suggested the possibility of using the local Reformed Church on Delille Street in the center of Marseille, which later became the property of the Armenian Evangelical Church. Rev. Ghazarossian became the

means of a powerful spiritual awakening, which gave a great impetus to the Armenian Evangelical Church in France, whose far-reaching impact is felt to this day.

It is interesting to note that the spiritual awakening first broke out among young people during a prayer meeting attended by 14 of them who were listening to the pastor. Soon after, evangelical gatherings, prayer meetings and Bible studies were added to the regular meetings. The fire of spiritual awakening began spreading inside and outside the Church. The Church Council members were shocked by this impulse. Young people in particular, some even far from Church circles, repented in large numbers. Immediately, divided among the neighborhoods of the city, they began to hand out Bibles, and spiritual literature, testifying to all about their faith.

The persecutions and the oppositions were not late. Armenian political newspapers started ridiculing and even threatening. But nothing could stop this impulse. From Marseille to Paris, Armenian Evangelical Churches were founded one after another. Repentance multiplied everywhere.

One of the most important consequences of this spiritual awakening was the birth of pastoral callings. Consequently, many young

people were sent to theological seminaries in France and Switzerland. **Revs. Zacharia Boudakian, Vahan Sahagian, Samuel Bakalian, Israel Abrahamian and Nerses Khatchadourian** were the fruits of this spiritual awakening.

The movement gradually spread, and religious and Armenian language courses were organized in Marseille and its suburbs. Five churches were established in the state of "Bouches du Rhône" – Marseille (downtown), Saint-Loup, Beaumont, Saint-Antoine and Gardanne.

In Saint-Loup, the spiritual work started by Rev. Ghazarossian a few years before, with the support of the lay brothers, continued when Rev. Sahagian was appointed pastor of that church in 1933. Not long after, land was purchased and a chapel was built in 8 months and inaugurated on October 28. The first Armenian Evangelical



Armenian Evangelical Church of Lyon - first established Church in France (1920).



Church in France was built in Saint-Loup. The spiritual work soon expanded in that Armenian-populated district.

The spiritual work in Beaumont began in 1926 through the efforts of **Sister Anna Jizmedjian**. In 1929, **Prof. Krikor Khayigian** settled there and immediately organized a prayer meeting, a Sunday school and an Armenian language class. When he left for Valence in 1933, Rev. Ghazarossian and **Brother Gulchan Badakian** replaced him. On March 5, 1939, a new chapel was opened in Beaumont.

Under very modest circumstances, the spiritual work began in Saint-Antoine – a small prayer meeting in a kitchen in 1927. After settling in St. Louis, Rev. Bakalian also expanded his activity to Saint-Antoine. When he left for the Middle East in 1938, **Rev. Margos Vekilian** organized the church of Saint-Antoine, and a chapel was erected there in 1939. The inauguration took place in 1941 because of World War II.

## LYON

The spiritual work began in Lyon in 1924, when Rev. Barsumian settled in this city. Meetings began at the Methodist Church and continued at the Young Christians Union Assembly Hall until a hall was rented on Royer Street. The spiritual work was soon organized and expanded - a biblical study for the young and a Sunday school for the little ones. In 1925, the Armenian Evangelical Church of France was convened in Lyon for the first consultative assembly of the Churches, and in 1927, the first General Assembly ("Synod") of the Union. Here, too, a spiritual awakening took place among the youth, and the Church of Lyon produced three clergymen: **Revs. Karekin Sislian, Margos Vekilian and Calvin Barsumian**.

## PONT d'AUBENAS

Many Armenian orphans settled in this city, finding work in the region's textile factories. Rev. Ghazarossian sent a young Christian teacher, Arakel Papazian, there and his pastoral work had a profound effect. In those days the Church of Pont d'Aubenas could be considered one of the most important and vibrant churches in France.

## MONTELMAR

Not long after, a community was formed in Montelmar with **Rev. Armen Guessarents**.

## VALENCE

In 1924, an evangelical community was slowly formed by **Brother Kevork Kieusseian** in Valence. A Spiritual Brotherhood church was also founded. It is after 1930 that the Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence developed due to the faithful work of the pastors.

## PARIS

An exploratory and evangelistic work had already been carried out in the French capital, by **Miss Haïganouche Hagopian** and the Theological Seminary student **Vahan Sahagian**, when in 1928 **Rev. J. Ghazarossian** took over the spiritual work, dividing time between Marseilles and Paris. But **Rev. Z. Boudakian** was the organizer of this Parisian church during his studies in Nogent Bible School. When he was incorporated into the army in 1939 and was forced to leave Paris, he left behind a well-formed, vibrant and large church. He was able to give a big boost to the youth activities. After his departure, **Rev. Armenak Missirian** continued his work, being alone in Paris during the crisis years of World War II.



*Armenian Evangelical Churches of Saint-Loup, Alfortville, Valence and St. Antoine.*

In 1944, a place of worship was established in Issy-les-Moulineaux a suburb of Paris. The community gradually grew and became the most important in France. A magnificent temple was built, and the inauguration took place in 1978.

There is also a small community in Alfortville, located in another suburb of Paris.



*Armenian Evangelical Church of Paris & Issy-les-Moulineaux, France.*



*Worship Service at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Paris & Issy-les-Moulineaux, France.*



Another is formed in the 17th district of Paris with Rev. K. Sislian's efforts. These two communities also had their own temples.

Some communities were more numerous than others such as Gardanne-Bivers, Saint-Etienne, Décines, and to a lesser extent Vienne and Pont de Chery. As the years went by and the population shifted, these communities lost their importance and became annex churches.

## CHURCH ORGANIZATION OF UAECF

The churches were initially governed by an Executive Committee, half of which consisted of French or Swiss members of the Action Chrétienne en Orient and the other half were members of the Armenian Evangelical Church. The Armenian members were elected during the Annual Meeting of the Union of Churches. In the early years, the financial support of Action Chrétienne en Orient was very important. The current Executive Committee took over by the Commission Synodale (Board), consisting only of Armenian members. And the UAECF has reached full financial self-sufficiency.

The Union's Annual Meeting brings together pastors and secular delegates from each Church. They are the ones who decide the main direction of the Union and elect the President of the Union and the Board.

## PUBLICATIONS

From the beginning, the Armenian Evangelical Church of France has given importance to the press, considering it as an exceptional means of evangelism. Consequently, the Union's Official newspaper in Armenian-language PANPERE, has been

published without interruption since 1925. Today it is sent to 2,000 addresses, more than half of which are abroad. Various other publications were published including books and spiritual wall calendars every year.

The special newspaper "Verelk" for young people began publication in 1946. It was followed by "Le Luminion," which was sent to about 1,000 addresses.

## SPIRITUAL WORK FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

From the beginning, special attention has been paid to this activity. Armenian special schools for children on Thursdays (then Wednesdays), as well as Sunday schools had many students until World War II and beyond. There were more than a hundred of them in the Sunday schools of many churches. The number of students currently attending Sunday school varies from 10 to 40, depending on the church.

However, there has been a new form of activity developed in recent years – the service provided in the camps. The Union has two camps: La Fontanelle and La Source. Hundreds of children, young people and adults come every year to strengthen themselves physically and spiritually.

As for the spiritual work being done among the youth, we must remember the first period of prosperity, which was the result of the beginning of awakening. After World War II, there was a new beginning with the formation of the Armenian Christian Youth Union (UCJA) within each church, as well as special youth camps. These unions consisted of many young people. However, this movement soon lost its force, and over the years many young people left the church.



Armenian Evangelical Churches of Beaumont, Montelimar, Arnouville and Décines.

There is also some renewal in this region, the tangible sign of which is the participation of young people in worship. In addition to the usual activities of young people in their Unions (gathering, scripture study, choir, etc.), they hold an annual "National Assembly Meeting" in early November. About a hundred people



Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of France - Synod 2021.



Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of France - in the early years.



are attending this important and unique conference.

The main issues of the youth are the assimilation and the loss of the mother tongue. Only French is spoken in Sunday schools and youth gatherings. Worshipers are bilingual, except in a number of small branches.

## PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

In recent years, the most remarkable progress has taken place in the field of construction. Churches everywhere have become the owners of their own buildings. At present, there are between 20 and 120 worshippers in some twelve communities with several small branches. Most Churches have sanctuaries that meet the requirements. At present, six pastors, all born in France, serve in these Churches. This, however, is a small number with two more pastors needed.

Clear progress has been made financially as well. The Union has become independent and the financial situation of Church members greatly improved, especially after World War II.

The balance cannot be unambiguous. Significant progress has been made in the areas of organization, construction, finance and camp activities. The activities of the Churches are incomparably excellent, with their small number, especially in serving children and young people. The French Union is the smallest among all the Armenian Evangelical Union worldwide.

A new spiritual awakening is needed. In the beginning, material poverty coincided

with a great spiritual thirst, which opened the door to awakening. Today's financial success can become the biggest trap, reducing the awareness of real needs. The future of the churches is connected with the awakening. The case is the same for all the Armenian Evangelicals in the world.

We would like to recognize the late **Rev. Jean Daniel Sahagian**'s important role in the life of the Union of France. He was a link between the old and the new generation of pastors from the 70s. He was a model for many, a man of God dedicated to his service and to the service of the churches

**Rev. Sahagian** was born in Marseille in 1933. After his theological training at the faculty of Strasbourg, he spent two years in Beirut, Lebanon to perfect his Armenian training. He was Pastor in Valence (1962-1972), in Issy-les-Moulineaux (1972-1983), and in Marseille-Beaumont (1983-1989). Rev. Sahagian was President of the Union France from 1976 to 1989. He was also President of the Armenian Evangelical World Council. His tragic and accidental death in 1989 at the age of 50 was a great loss for the whole Union of France.

During the same period in the life of the France Union, the ministry of the late **Rev. Jean Agopian** was also appreciated by all.

## CURRENT SITUATION

Currently, the Armenian Evangelical Church of France continues its mission in France, Europe, Armenia and the Middle East.

In France, our churches continue to operate in cities with large Armenian communities. We have three churches in Marseille located in the Armenian-populated districts of Saint-Loup, Beaumont and Saint-Antoine. There are two churches in the Drome region, in the cities of Montelimar and Valence. Also, in the center of France, there are churches in Lyon and Decines. In the Paris region there are three churches in the suburbs of Paris: Alfortville, Arnouville and Issy-les-Moulineaux. We also have a building church in the center of Paris, which is now rented to a French church.

UAECF owns two camp sites, La Fontanelle and La Source. Hundreds of children, young people and families hear the Word of God each year and are engaged in a variety of activities. The Union has also established a Youth Organization, the Union Chrétienne de Jeunes Arméniens (Armenian Christian Youth Union), led by young people, to serve the teens and youth.

We also have a Missions Committee that helps our churches in the Middle East, in particular (Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon), and those in Europe (Belgium, Bulgaria and Germany).

Our official bi-monthly publication, "Panpere" is published in Armenian and French and is sent to many countries. It will soon celebrate the centenary of its founding.

Immediately after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, our Union established a humanitarian organization, Hope for Armenia (Espoir pour l'Arménie), to help the victims.



La Source Camp (Evian).



For 30 years, this organization has been involved in various activities in the Homeland and Artsakh, in partnership with the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

UAECF is the co-founder of the Armenian Evangelical World Council. This important Council connects all-Armenian Evangelical Churches around the world with each other. It is governed by a Board and consists of four ordained pastors and four lay people who are delegates from four regions (Marseille, Drome, Lyon and Paris). The Union has nine active pastors and one student in the Theological Seminary.

Recently, the Union applied for an audit to have a balance of the past years and future prospects. Many inspections have been carried out, and are currently working to improve the functioning, clarify the vision, and find ways to use their reflections in the future. Today UAECF churches face major challenges, such as preserving the Armenian identity in the Diaspora, passing it on to the new generations, replacing pastors, accepting and consolidating compatriots from Armenia and other countries, evangelism, witnessing in the Armenian communities, and establishing new churches. The challenges are many, and the Union is counting on God's help and support to meet them.

On the occasion of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Evangelical Church, may God bless all our Churches and strengthen our fraternal ties for the sake of His glory and kingdom in our people.



UAECF Publications: Periodical, books, calendar and Hymnal.

Current active pastors of UAECF are Rev. Jacques Tchoghandjian (Marseille-Beaumont), Rev. Samuel Albarian (Marseille-Saint-Antoine), Pierre Lachat (Montelimar), Rev. Rene Leonian (Valence), Rev. Paul Siwajian (Lyon and Decines), Rev. Gilbert Leonian (Alforville), Past. Emmanuel Virabyan (Arnouville), Rev. Joel Mikaelian (Paris- Issy-les-Moulineaux).

Meline Kinossian (Theological Student, Youth pastor and communication), Hagop Koujikian (Theological Student), Seyran Assulyan (Assistant Pastor in Arnouville).

(History according to the book: "The Armenian Evangelical Movement" by Rev. Daniel Sahagian).



\* Rev. Joël Mikaélian is the President of UAECF.

AMAA NEWS will in successive issues publish the history of the remaining Armenian Evangelical Unions worldwide.



La Fontanelle Camp (Lasalle).





# EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF ARMENIA GORIS

By Rev. Sargis Ochinyan, Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Goris

**G**oris (Գորիս) is a town and the center of the urban community of Goris, in Syunik Province at the south of Armenia. Located in the valley of River Goris (or Vararak) on the intersection of Yerevan-Artsakh and Yerevan-Meghri-Iran interstate highways, it is 254 km from the Armenian capital Yerevan and 67 km from the provincial center Kapan. Goris is the second largest city in Syunik in terms of population. The town has an average elevation of 1398 meters above sea level.

The ultimate goal of every Christian Church, including the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Goris, is to share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the people – "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10

The victorious Syunik Province needed recovery from the wounds it suffered and from the impact of the difficult economic situation during the first Artsakh War (1988-1994). Following the ceasefire of the first Artsakh War, we paid numerous visits to Artsakh. And after implementing some of the AMAA's programs in that region, the AMAA and the Evangelical Church of Armenia decided to have a permanent presence in the strategically important city of Goris right on the border.

In 1997, my wife and I were invited to move to Goris to establish and organize an AMAA Center and be the manager of the Center and at the same time serve as the Assistant Pastor of the Church

in Goris. After praying and asking God's guidance, we moved to Goris in October 1997 to carry out the mission for which we were invited. Now, 25 years later, looking back, it is difficult to summarize all the successes and failures, victories and defeats we had during our service. But one thing is evident that without the Grace of God and love for one's neighbor, our service, outreach and caring for others would have been impossible and ineffective. After three years of hard work, the work slowly bore fruit, and regular worship services began. Since October 2000, every Sunday at 11:00 am people gather in the church hall located at 105 V. Mamikonyan Street, to worship and pray, as well as to share their joys and sorrows, love and care.

In the Goris Church, both Christian and national holidays are celebrated to build up the Armenian Christian character in people. All these were not accomplished easily. The 70-year-old atheism



Rev. Sargis Ochinyan, Pastor of Goris Church.



Ordination Service of Rev. Sargis Ochinyan.



Christmas Program at Goris Church.



had hardened the hearts of the people toward Christian faith, and the turbulent period of the 90s had raised many questions in the form of thorns and thistles. Before throwing the seed in the ground, it had to be cleaned of stones and thorns, dug and crushed.

I thank God for the people who directly contributed to this difficult mission. First, I remember the late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, who, despite the doctor's advice, visited Goris in 1999, and had a major input for the purchase of the current Church Building and AMAA Center. I also remember Rev. René Léonian and Harout Nercessian and many others who directly and indirectly contributed to the establishment and development of the Church in Goris with their prayers and gifts of love. I especially want to thank Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian for his contribution to the life of Goris Church for the last 10 years.

Currently the number of Church members exceeds 40, and Church life is guided by a three-member Board of Trustees, led by the Pastor. By the grace of God, in July 2009, after graduating from the Theological Academy and doing internship, I was ordained by the Evangelical Church of Armenia. Since then, I have served as the full-time Pastor of this Church.

The Evangelical Church of Armenia in Goris pays special importance to the Christian education of children, adolescents and young people. Since 1998, the Goris Church has been organizing children's and youth programs, Christmas and Easter events, as well as summer camps. Through these programs, children and adolescents learn about God's promise, about the Bible principles, and make new friends and acquaintances.

The 44-day Artsakh War and the COVID pandemic of the last two years, left their marks on the life of the Church, but not on its mission and goal.

We are deeply convinced and believe that the seeds sown today will bear fruits "a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." To make the programs more interesting and meaningful, regular excursions are organized to the historical and cultural places of Artsakh and Armenia. In the meantime, children, adolescents and young people are not only exposed to spiritual and cultural values but are also perceived as part of God's great and infinite creation, which must be preserved and nurtured.

Unfortunately, the loss of Shushi as a result of the 44-day Artsakh War, where the Bedrosian Camp was located, limited our opportunities, but gave us an opportunity to come to God in prayer and seek new opportunities.

Since 2001, with prayer and vision our Church expanded the geography of its services, carrying out caring and charitable pro-

grams in the cities of Kapan and Sisian. After serving in Kapan for seven years and in Sisian for 12 years, we were able to establish churches in these two cities.

We praise God that Goris Church was able to prepare two pastors and more than 20 Christian Education workers, who currently serve in Armenia, Russia and Europe.

The Goris Church, as part of the society, could not remain indifferent to the social issues of its surrounding. It is true that the Church is called to resolve all social problems but can and should express its love in practice.

Since 1997, the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Goris, with the support of the AMAA, as well as other organizations and individuals, has been implementing numerous charitable programs not only in Goris, but also in the greater Syunik Province. Since the 44-day Artsakh War the Church extended its service to the rural bordering villages and communities. We praise God and give special thanks to all the benefactors who sacrificially supported us and made possible the implementation of these programs.

In conclusion, I would like to convey one message from the Word of God, which has fundamentally changed and continues to change our spiritual life and the social status in our churches, Homeland and world, making it more interesting and meaningful. It has been and remains the principle of life and service of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Goris. "So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12



*Sunday morning Worship Service at Goris Church.*

*(Translated from Eastern Armenian by Louisa Janbazian)*



*Members of various Boards of Goris Church.*



*Children's Vacation Bible School of Goris Church.*



# Good Tidings to Lebanon

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian\*

Throughout the world, the end of the year is a time for anticipation and celebrations. As children look forward to gifts, adults look for ways to make wishes come true, and believers everywhere rejoice in Christ's birth and revelation. The Armenian community of Lebanon is no exception to the excitement of New Year's and Christmas, but the deep economic crisis of the country has made it near impossible for these plans and dreams to be realized.

With the generous support of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), the 2021-2022 Christmas and New Year season in Lebanon was filled with joy and good tidings. The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE), through the work of its schools, churches, Christian Endeavor Society and Social Action Committee, used that material support to prepare special events and gifts to celebrate the year's end and the birth of Christ Jesus.

Lebanon's Armenian Evangelical school teachers face particular hardships, as the value of their salaries have decreased to a tiny fraction of what it was just two years ago. The AMAA's monetary gift brought some needed comfort to 190 full-time and part-time teachers and staff of the four Armenian Evangelical schools of Lebanon, while also sending the message that the educational ministry of the church is central

to its forward-looking mission.

Sunday School children from churches in Beirut and Anjar, along with some from the Christian Social Center in Trad (Bourj Hammoud), gathered at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash on December 25, 2021. Nearly 200 children enjoyed an exciting time of music, games, carol singing and gifts along with a visit from Santa. The team of volunteers from the churches organized, prepared and led the program, putting a smile on the children's faces, and helping them to celebrate the Christmas season.

In late December and early January, the Armenian Evangelical Christian Social Center in Trad brought gifts of cash and dried fruits (something far beyond the ability of many to purchase) to many impoverished, elderly Armenians in the Bourj Hammoud area. They also distributed cash gifts for food purchases to over 300 families, enabling them to set a holiday table for their families and loved ones. In this same season the Social Action Committee and staff also worked tirelessly to host a Christmas celebration for



the 65 children registered in the Center's Study Room and Playground programs, with a meal, games and many gifts, including a voucher for each one to buy new pajamas and necessary clothing at a neighborhood store. Again, all of this was made possible through a special grant from the AMAA.

It is difficult to imagine the many ways that the setbacks in Lebanon have impacted the daily lives and the hopes of Lebanese of every walk of life, every age and every community. The heartfelt gifts from the AMAA have lifted the spirits of many when they most needed it and helped many to tangibly feel the promise of "good tidings of great joy" in Jesus' name. 🌟



\* **Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian** is the Coordinator of Church Relations of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. Rev. Bakalian's ministry in Lebanon is supported jointly by the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ.



# AMAA Continues to Help Needy in Lebanon and Syria

## LEBANON

Approaching three years of unprecedented economic and financial crises compounded by the 2020 Port of Beirut explosion, the lives of Lebanese people remain a daily struggle. From trying to secure basic needs to finding critical medical care, people are forced to review their spending priorities and live with new norms.

The AMAA has been answering the call and supporting the valiant efforts of the Armenian Evangelical Social Action Committee (SAC). Through its work, SAC was able to reach out to over 5,000 cases just in 2021.

In addition to the Committee's regular services, the following has been added to its focus: direct financial support to individuals in need; an increase in home care hygiene/emergency renovations and repairs; food distribution, distribution of milk and diapers for 150 infants and toddlers; distribution of adult diapers and bed pads to over 45 bedridden elderly individuals; monetary assistance to more than 30 families with an eviction notice, who have not been able to afford rent due to unemployment, illness or disability; medical and psychological support; children and teen social programs; and assistance in obtaining emergency or procedural surgeries, diagnostic tests and oxygen meters. Access to medications remains either unavailable or monopolized.

Despite all obstacles and through the grace of God, the Committee has been able to help lessen the financial, medical and emotional burdens of thousands of people

using funds received from the AMAA and generous relief donors. The AMAA will remain steadfast and ready to provide what help is needed.

## SYRIA

In 2021, the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria continued its mission taking care of people serving those in need and glorifying His holy name.

With the support of the AMAA, the Armenian Evangelical Social Action Committee in Syria continued providing social services and relief programs in Aleppo, Kessab and Damascus.

Besides financial aid that was provided to families, students and teachers on various occasions (Christmas and Easter), food and hygiene kits, winter fuel allowance, stoves and blankets were also distributed. In addition, clothing coupons were distributed to needy students, medical and financial support were provided to elderly over 70, visitations to the old people's home and Armenian Orphanage were arranged and family retreats were organized for the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Aleppo.

During 2021, the Bethel Polyclinic of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church of Aleppo distributed medication and provided healthcare to more than 24,200 patients. The Bethel Polyclinic has become an advanced health care center which is capable of handling more than 13 specialties delivered to patients by healthcare professionals who are recognized for their medical excellence. The Church also continued



Trad Social Service Center of the UAECNE - relief for distribution.



to extend financial assistance for medical surgeries and hospital expenses to those in immediate need.

The AMAA's continued support has made a difference in the lives of those who were impacted by the region's economic crisis. May God continue to strengthen our leadership in Syria who faithfully serve our people in His name. 🇸🇾



Children at Trad Social Service Center for "After-School Study Room."



Children receive gift certificates for clothing in Aleppo, Syria.





# The Good News Proclaimed at Christmas Joy Programs in Armenia and Artsakh

**J**anuary is the month to proclaim the Good News of Christmas at the AMAA Centers and Armenian Evangelical Churches in Armenia and Artsakh. All the leaders of our churches and the children in about 25 towns and villages once again sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." In every town and village, the Good News was proclaimed in a different way. They spoke about giving, loving, forgiving each other, and the reason for all this was the Savior, the Son of God, who first loved us and became human to show His love.

Excitement, hearts full of love, eyes shining with joy and hope is all that could be seen throughout more than 70 Christmas Joy Programs where over 12,000 children proclaimed the Good News to others.

As Christmas is the time to give and receive gifts, the AMAA and the Evangelical Church of Armenia together prepared over 12,000 Christmas Joy Packages for the children to complete their joy.

We thank all our donors who supported our children in Armenia and Artsakh this year by donating to our Christmas Joy Program. May the Gospel of Christmas joy, peace and love reign in our hearts, in our families and in our country throughout the year. 🇦🇲



*Christmas in Arevis (a border village).*



*Christmas in Artsakh.*



*Christmas in Sarvard (a border village).*



*Christmas in Berd, Armenia.*



*Christmas in Yerevan*



# AEWC Meets in Fresno, CA



By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, AEWK Executive Director

**T**he Executive Committee of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) held its Annual Meeting at the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church in Fresno, CA, on October 21-22, 2021. The Committee expressed its thanks to the Church for hosting its Annual Meeting.

Participating in the meeting in person and virtually were representatives of the five Church Unions, the Armenian Missionary Association of America and Stephen Philibosian Foundation. The Executive Committee dealt with ecclesiastical and missions' issues on the agenda and made decisions accordingly.

The year 2021, being the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church, the Executive Committee registered with joy the Anniversary celebrations and activities which were held to date. It looks forward to events which will be held in the coming months. Because of the Covid pandemic, the celebratory activities which were to be held in Armenia during June 25 to July 5, 2021, were postponed until 2022 in the same venues and on the same dates.

The Executive Committee was happy to welcome the publication of the Commemorative Volume, *Hooshamadyan*, on the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. It expressed its gratitude to the editor, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, and to those writers who were appointed to prepare articles for the book and those who had an input in the book's publication. The *Hooshamadyan* was published in Yerevan, Armenia in May 2021. Copies of the book were distributed to the member organizations of AEWK. It was also reported that the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America will render its English edition next year.

By happy coincidence, this year (2021) both the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh are celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of independence. On this happy occasion, the Executive Committee, on behalf of AEWK, congratulates our twin Republics and pledges its support for their independence and prosperity.

The Executive Committee paid its respects to the victims of the Artsakh War and demands the immediate release of the Armenian prisoners of war detained by Azerbaijan since November 9, 2020.

The AEWK strongly condemns the Azeri government for its continuous unprovoked aggression against the peaceful Armenian population, and for its threats and demands against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our twin Republics of Armenia and Artsakh. The AEWK continues to stand in solidarity with the Armenian nation and the Armenian people.

The Executive Committee also discussed the situation of the Armenian communities in the Middle East, particularly the crisis created in Lebanon over the past years, including the economic downturn, the severe devaluation of the Lebanese currency, and unprecedented financial hardship and pledged to reinvigorate its fundraising efforts through the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

On behalf of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, the Executive Committee appeals to the Armenian public in general and to the Armenian Evangelical Constituency in particular, to stand in solidarity and continue to strengthen our Fatherland Armenia, Artsakh and the Armenian community in the Diaspora. 🇺🇸

## **Executive Committee members of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.**

**Front row L to R:** Rev. Albert Paytyan, Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Dr. Nazareth E. Darakjian, Joyce Philibosian Stein. **Back Row L to R:** Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Rev. Samuel Albarian, and Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian. **Missing from the photo:** Rev. Rev. Joël Mikaélian, Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Zaven Khanjian, Dr. Nurhan Helvacian and Rev. Megerditch Karagoezian.





# 50 Euros to 1 Million Dollars

## AMAA Appreciates Its Generous Donors

**F**rom a heartfelt gift of 50 euros to several gifts of 1 million dollars each, the AMAA has been the recent recipient of some very generous donations to support our Mission.

The gift of 50 euros was sent to the AMAA from a new donor in Greystones, Ireland who attended a presentation by **Etain Murphy**, an author in Ireland. The author mentioned the AMAA and our work in Armenia and Artsakh in her speech and asked the attendees to consider supporting our Mission. The donor was moved by the author's presentation and the gift was sent in response to this request.

In addition, the AMAA received an unrestricted gift of \$1 million from

the **Grille Foundation**. The Grille Foundation was established in 2010 to support causes in the spheres of religion, poverty relief and education. The Foundation, which has made several other major gifts to the AMAA in the past, stated "we are grateful that we can join and support those who seek to do good and follow God. God bless the work of the AMAA and your leadership."

The AMAA received a gift of \$1 million from the estate of **Harry Bedoian**. His sister, **Mary Bedoian** informed the AMAA that the gift was to be used to help the wounded soldiers and the families who lost soldiers in the Artsakh War and also those who were displaced and lost homes during the war.

AMAA Board member **Edward Avedisian** and his wife, **Pamela**, recently made two generous donations to the AMAA. The Avedisians donated a gift of \$1 million for the Avedisian School Endowment Fund, which the AMAA will match. They also set up a \$255,000 endowment fund that will last for one hundred years. The fund is designated to reward the teachers, faculty, administrators and full-time employees of the Avedisian School with a bonus over and above their salary each year. The fund will increase their bonus, previously \$50 per year, by \$5 every three years. "We established this endowment fund to let the staff and faculty of the Avedisian School in Yerevan, Armenia know how much


## Support Our Heroes



The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and the Support Our Heroes Charitable NGO have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, according to which AMAA generously sponsors the construction of 6 out of the 16 homes of Project Nakhijevanik, in Askeran. Participation in this program is part of the AMAA's mission to rebuild and resettle Artsakh. Immediately after the war, the AMAA resumed its Artsakh support campaign, not only to provide emergency aid, but also to help rebuild what was destroyed. To date, AMAA has renovated 17 houses in Artsakh, in the cities of Stepanakert and Martuni. Support Our Heroes NGO launched Project Nakhijevanik in January 2021. The NGO has since received a 3 hectare land in the village of Nakhijevanik, Askeran from the Artsakh government as a grant, has performed all required soil engineering work, and developed the required detailed plans and budget for the construction of a new community of 16 homes, along with district infrastructure and a community park. Ground has been broken at this time and bulldozers are working at Nakhijevanik, performing site grading and excavation work.

we appreciate them and their wonderful work," said Mr. Avedisian, who along with the AMAA, established the non-tuition and award-winning School in 1998 and expanded it in 2014.

"The AMAA is very blessed to receive all donations, from the smallest to the largest," said Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA. "Each gift is given from the heart and means so much to us and to the thousands of our brothers and sisters in the 24 countries we serve around the world. The gifts help to make a difference in the lives of so many people."

There are many ways to support the Mission of the AMAA. Cash, in the form of a check or online gift, is one of the most common forms of giving to the AMAA. Recently sold securities, stocks or other investments offer another opportunity. An endowment fund in the name of an individual, family or organization can be established with an outright contribution in the amount of \$1,000 or more. Planned gifts can be arranged through a variety of giving instruments, including your will, living trusts, life insurance, charitable gift annuities or retirement accounts. If you are interested in learning more about ways to give to the AMAA, please contact Magda Poulos, Director of Operations and Donor Relations, at the AMAA, 201-265-2607, Ext. 107. 



## AMAA Stepanavan Center

The newly constructed AMAA Center in Stepanavan houses the Soup Kitchen and provides various ministries for children, adults and seniors.

On July 3, 2022 AMAA will formally dedicate the Stepanavan Center to the forebearers of the founders of the Grille Foundation.



## Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School



Established in 1999 and moved to its current state of the art complex in 2014, the main mission of Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School and Community Center is based on modern teaching aids to implement high-quality pre-school to secondary education programs for children in the southwestern district of Yerevan and establish special privileges for children from socially disadvantaged families. The Avedisian School has proven that it has been able to maintain the best principles of the education system developed over the decades and is able to incorporate the global experience of private schools in its activities, thus becoming one of the best in the Armenian education system.



# AEUNA and AMAA Leaders Meet with Armenian Denominational Leaders

In mid-January, a delegation of Armenian Evangelical leaders including Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) Interim Minister to the Union Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian and AEUNA Vice Moderator & Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church Pastor Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) CEO/Executive Director Zaven Khanjian and AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian visited with other Armenian denominational leaders in Southern California. They expressed good wishes for the holiday season and welcomed in the New Year together.

On January 14, the delegation visited Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, to discuss opportunities for collaboration as well as current and future activities of the churches.

On January 19, the delegation visited Bishop Torkom Donoyan, Prelate of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, to convey their support for Lebanese Armenians and readiness to continue the Lebanese Armenian assistance programs and to reach out to all Armenians living in Lebanon.

Also on January 19, the delegation visited with Bishop of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of the U.S. and Canada Bishop Mikael Mouradian, at St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral, conveying congratulations on the election of the new Armenian Catholic Catholicos Patriarch Raphaël Bedross XXI Minassian.



January 14, 2022, at Western Diocese of the Armenian Orthodox Church, Burbank, CA: (L to R) Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Zaven Khanjian, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian and Rev. Serop Megerditchian.



January 19, 2022, at Western Prelacy, La Crescenta, CA: (L to R) Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Bishop Torkom Donoyan, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian and Zaven Khanjian.



January 19, 2022, at Armenian Catholic Eparchy, Glendale, CA: (L to R) Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Bishop Mikael Mouradian, Zaven Khanjian and Dr. Nazareth Darakjian.

Among topics discussed during these meetings were the current situation of Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh and Lebanon, and ways to collaborate and support them; the situation of the church in Armenia during Soviet Republic times and now; and how to keep Armenians' faith strong, with a focus on the family and youth. 🇺🇸





## Good News from Istanbul and Tuzla CAMP ARMEN TO BE REBUILT

**T**he Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) welcomes the news of the rebuilding of Camp ARMEN in Tuzla and is committed to support the Camp's reconstruction.

In 1962, land located in Tuzla, Istanbul was purchased by the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa Foundation and Camp ARMEN was built on it. In 1974, properties belonging to Christian Foundations were seized due to the country's political atmosphere which was affected by political activities outside the country. The camp land was one of the properties that was seized by the authorities.

In 2015, with the consent of the President and in line with instructions from the Prime Minister at the time, a 4,715 m2 portion of the original 8,600 m2 property was returned to the Foundation by the Mayor of Tuzla. Following the return of the 4,715 m2 portion of land, work began quickly. A new architectural plan has been completed, a license obtained, and construction will be started soon. The new Camp ARMEN project will maintain its orphanage character, will serve as a "Youth and Information Center," and will continue to operate throughout the year. Contact is also currently being made with relevant authorities for the return of a remaining part of the property owned by the Tuzla municipality.

"Camp ARMEN will be the first and only Camp in Turkey to function as a development center by serving our community every month throughout the year with social, cultural and religious development activities with the help of trained volunteers," said Rev. Krikor Ağabaloğlu, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa, Istanbul, Turkey. "Camp ARMEN was established in 1962 by children whose small hands carried water, sand, cement and bricks. They literally wrote a story of existence. They built the Camp like a monument and called it Camp ARMEN. They left a lasting heritage that has never been forgotten. Let us, as the elders of today, bring Camp ARMEN back to life with the same spirit. By saying, 'we have been broken down but not destroyed and we will last forever,' let's build a renewed and renovated

Camp ARMEN for this era. Let's make Camp ARMEN come alive together through our voluntary contributions and keep Camp ARMEN alive with the stories that have been lived in the past."

"Under the leadership of Hrant Guzelian, Camp ARMEN was indeed a blessing to a multitude of Armenian youngsters from the plains of Anatolia, including Hrant Dink and his wife Rakel. We hope and pray that the new Camp will continue to be a blessing to a new wave of Armenian Youth from all corners, including Anatolia," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO.

Just recently the AMAA helped the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa make renovations to the Church structure and give a facelift with a new coat of paint throughout the building. Besides Church activities, the Gedik Paşa Church operates the Hrant Dink School. Founded in 2003, the main goal of the School is to create a small Homeland for children from Armenia living in Istanbul and give them an Armenian upbringing and education until the day comes for them to return to Armenia and continue their education in the Homeland. 🇹🇷



Hrant Guzelian with the Camp ARMEN children - 1960s.



# Rev. John Melkonian Celebrates 90 Years of God's Blessings

**R**ev. John Melkonian was honored by family and friends with a surprise celebration of his 90th birthday on Friday, December 3, 2021, at Phoenicia Restaurant in Glendale, California. Over 125 guests including relatives, former students, colleagues, ministers, representatives of community organizations and members of the Armenian press gathered to celebrate the life and ministry of Rev. Melkonian. The evening was one of jubilation and praise. It was an opportunity to praise God for the favor of a long and fruitful life, and to thank Him for His enduring love and faithfulness.

Psalm 105:1-2 encapsulates the theme for Rev. Melkonian's life as well as for the evening: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts." Indeed, Rev. Melkonian has experienced God's faithfulness in every season of his life, and he has witnessed to all of God's eternal love.

The birthday celebration was an occasion for praising God for the wondrous works in the life of Rev. Melkonian. It was a theme that was underscored by his family as they reflected on the life of their husband and father. Jeanette, Badveli's wife, reflected on her life with her beloved husband, describing him as a man of deep faith and integrity, a dedicated servant of God, a kind and sweet soul, and an exemplary husband and father. Central to her personal stories were verses, such as Romans 8:28, that were gifted to her by him which sustained her throughout the years – "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Doris and Arda, Badveli's daughters, presented a biographical sketch of their father's life journey which included his ministry, accomplishments, as well as candid family anecdotes. They described a nurturing, attentive and devoted father who, along with their mother, created a happy, loving, joy-filled home. They portrayed a man with a compassionate heart, who has touched many lives, yet never seeking recognition or applause. A slideshow of Rev. Melkonian's life in all its facets (personal, educational and ministry) revealed a full and blessed life. The evening was enriched with musical performances of beloved hymns by Maral Parseghian, and performances of classical and popular pieces on the harp by Karina Ward.

Recognizing God's blessings in their father's life, Doris and Arda announced their gift of \$90,000 to be distributed among churches, institutions and organizations that have significance for their father as institutions of higher learning where he has been educated; communities and churches where he has ministered; and organizations where he has served. The recipients of \$10,000 each are: Near East School of Theology (Lebanon), Haigazian University (Lebanon), Armenian Community of Kessab (Syria), Armenian Evangelical Secondary School of Anjar (Lebanon),




Shamlan-Tatigian Armenian Evangelical School (Lebanon), Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church (United States), Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church (United States), Church of the Nazarene World Missions (United States), and Sahag Mesrob Armenian Christian School (United States).

Among those who paid tribute were Rev. Berdj Djambazian who was Rev. Melkonian's pupil in Anjar. Rev. Djambazian lovingly recalled that Rev. Melkonian's sermons which he had notated, sustained and inspired him while he was studying in Switzerland. Rev. Dikran Shanlian, a family friend, shared in a letter Rev. Melkonian's humility, sincerity, and loving spirit. Rev. Serop Megerditchian, family friend and the master of ceremonies for the evening, recalled Rev. Melkonian's fatherly love and steady support.

Personal reflections of love and respect for the honoree, applauding Rev. Melkonian for many decades of fruitful service to the church and the entire Armenian community were delivered by Dr. Ivan Shnorhokian, Zaven Hanessian, Zaven Demirjian, Dikran Khanjian, Jacqueline Pambakian, Rebecca Karaminassian, Maria Vartanian, Gabriel Moloyan and Ara Assilian.

Celebrating this wonderful milestone with Rev. Melkonian were his colleagues: Rev. Daniel Albarian, Rev. Berdj Djambazian, Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian, Rev. Dr. Vartkes Kassouni, Rev. Dr. John Khanjian, Rev. Soghomon Kilagblian, Rev. Darwin Ng, Rev. Joe Matossian, Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian and Rev. Ron Tovmassian.

The memorable event concluded with the honoree expressing words of appreciation, thanking God for nine decades of blessings, thanking his family and friends, and promising to continue to glorify God with his life. 



# AMAA Now Accepting Scholarship Applications



**T**he Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2022-2023 academic year for full-time undergraduate students of Armenian descent studying in North America.

Students interested in applying for scholarships should personally request the link for the application form by calling 201-265-2607 ext. 127 or by email, [lucyr@amaa.org](mailto:lucyr@amaa.org). Previous recipients must reapply each year. It is the responsibility of the student to request an application form.

Incomplete items and/or missing documents will automatically disqualify an applicant.

All application forms must be completed online and be submitted no later than May 1, 2022.

Awards are made by the Scholarship Committee, which takes into consideration the applicant's grades, financial need, the tuition cost of the college he/she will attend/attends, accomplishments, future leadership potential and good character references. Please note, AMAA Scholarship checks are issued directly to academic institutions and not to individuals. 🇺🇸

## JAMES G. JAMESON ESSAY CONTEST OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

**T**he James G. Jameson Essay Contest, sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), runs every academic year and is financed from the income of a special fund established by Mr. and Mrs. James G. Jameson of Brookline, MA.

All Armenian and part-Armenian students attending schools in North America are eligible. Only unpublished essays are accepted which are written in English and have a length of 1,000 to 2,000 words.

The topics of the Contest are required to touch upon some aspect of Armenian heritage and experience, such as religion, history, culture, literature, language, art, architecture, geography and economics.

Essays are judged based on merit in such criteria as content, style, logic and reasoning, coherence and usage.

Awards for the Contest are made in two categories: College/University contestants, and High School contestants.

The deadline for entries is May 1, 2022.

Entries and/or inquiries should be directed to: James G. Jameson Essay Contest, c/o of The Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652 or e-mailed to [lucyr@amaa.org](mailto:lucyr@amaa.org).



# «Ինչո՞ւ խռոված էք... Ես Ձեզի հետ եմ»

Վեր. Սերոբ Մկրտչեան\*

**Յ**արութեան Տօն: Սուրբ Զատիկ: Ուրախութեամբ կը յայտարարուի թէ Քրիստոս մեռելներէն Յարութիւն առած է: Սակայն միեւնոյն ատեն, մարդ արարածը մարտահրաւերներով լեցուն կեանք կ'ապրի եւ յուսահատութեամբ խռոված է, այնպէս ինչպէս էր աշակերտներուն վիճակը Տէր Յիսուսի խաչելութենէն ետք: Այնպէս ինչպէս որ էր Հայ ժողովուրդի վիճակը Հայոց Յեղասպանութենէն՝ 1915-էն ետք եւ ինչպէս որ է այսօր Հայ ազգի զաւակներուն յուսահատ եւ խռոված վիճակը, յատկապէս Արցախեան 44 օրեայ պատերազմէն ետք:

Տէր Յիսուսի խաչելութենէն ետք, աշակերտները երուսաղէմ կը դառնան եւ անկասկած յուսահատ ու խռոված վիճակի մէջ:

Սակայն Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս իր հռաշափառ Յարութենէն ետք կ'երեւի անոնց եւ կը հարցնէ. «Ինչո՞ւ խռոված էք» (Ղուկ. 24. 38):

Անկեղծ եւ առարկայական ըլլանք:

Ինչո՞ւ խռոված չըլլային:

Ինչո՞ւ չվախնային:

Ինչո՞ւ չյուսահատէին:

Շատ բնական էր աշակերտներուն խռովիլը, վախնալը եւ յուսահատիլը: Յոյսերնին Յիսուսի վրայ դրած էին եւ հիմա Յիսուս մեռած ու թաղուած էր: Այլ խօսքով Յիսուս հետերնին չէր:

Երբ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս աշակերտներուն կ'երեւի, կը վստահեցնէ թէ Ինքն էր խաչեալը եւ որպէս Յարուցեալ Փրկիչ իրենց հետ է եւ ուրեմն կարիք չկայ խռովելու եւ վախնալու: Ան կ'ըսէ. «Ամէն օր ես ձեզի հետ եմ, մինչեւ աշխարհիս վերջը» (Մատթ. 28. 20):

Դժբախտաբար կ'ապրինք այնպիսի վիճակներու եւ պարագաներու մէջ, կարծէք Տէր Յիսուս տակաւին խաչին վրայ մեռած է եւ կամ գերեզմանին մէջ թաղուած:

Ահաւասիկ երկու տարիներ եւ ամբողջ աշխարհը անդամալուծուած է համաճառակի պատճառով: Նաեւ, տարբեր փորձանքներ եւ փորձութիւններ կը հալածեն մարդ արարածը:

Իսկ ազգային գետնի վրայ, պատերազմ, նահատակներ, վախ, ցաւ, վիշտ եւ իւրաքանչիւր անձ եւ ընտանիք շուարած ու խռոված եւ այս բոլոր վիճակներուն մէջ, կը կարծենք թէ մեր ամենօրեայ օրերը «Աւագ Ուրբաթ»ներ են:

Այլ խօսքով, կը կարծենք թէ Տէր Յիսուս մեռած է:

Ապա թէ ոչ պէտք էր այս բոլորը դադրէին եւ Յարութեան լոյսը պայծառացներ մեր վրայ եւ հեռացներ մեզմէ սեւ եւ մութ ամպերը:

Սակայն այս մարտահրաւերներուն մէջ Տէր Յիսուս կը հարցնէ. «Ինչո՞ւ խռոված էք» (Ղուկ. 24. 38): Եւ կը վստահեցնէ ըսելով. «Ամէն օր ես ձեզի հետ եմ» (Մատթ. 28. 20):

Իսկապէս Յիսուս մեռած չէ: Թէեւ կը կարծենք թէ «Աւագ Ուրբաթ»ներու կեանք կ'ապրինք, սակայն Քրիստոսի հրաշափառ յարութեամբ կը գոյատեւենք եւ Անոր Սուրբ Հոգիին զօրութեամբ կը գիտակցինք Իր ներկայութեան:

Փաստ՝ մեր ամենօրեայ հրաշագործութեամբ ապրած եւ ծառայած կեանքը ըլլայ Հայրենիքի եւ Արցախի մէջ եւ կամ սփիւռքի տարածքին:

Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս միշտ մեզի հետ է, բայց այս չի նշանակեր առանց մարտահրաւերներու եւ դժուարութիւններու կեանք պիտի ապրինք:

Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս կ'ըսէ. «Աշխարհի մէջ նեղութիւն պիտի ունենաք, բայց քաջասի՛րտ եղէք, ես աշխարհին յաղթեցի» (Յովհ. 16. 33):

Քաջասի՛րտ ըլլալ եւ գիտակցիլ թէ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս մեզի հետ է, կը նշանակէ զօրանալ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսով եւ Անոր զօրութեան կարողութիւնովը, որպէսզի կարող ըլլանք Սատանային ու չարին հնարքներուն դէմ դնել:

Պօղոս Առաքեալ կ'ըսէ. «Ձեր տեղը կայնեցէք, մեջքերնիդ ճշմարտութեամբ ամրացնելով ու արդարութեան զրաւը հազնելով ու ոտքերնուդ ամրացուցէ՛ք խաղաղութեան աւետարանին պատրաստութիւնը եւ ամէն բանի վրայ հաւատքին վահանը առէ՛ք, որով կարող պիտի ըլլաք չարին բոլոր կրակոտ նետերը մարել եւ փրկութեան սաղաւարտը առէ՛ք ու հոգիին սուրը՝ որ Աստուծոյ խօսքն է» (Եփես. 6. 14-17):

Գիտակցիլ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսի մեզի հետ ըլլալուն եւ զօրանալ Անոր զօրութեամբ, կը նշանակէ. -

## 1. Մեջքերնիս ճշմարտութեամբ Ամրացնել:

Տէր Յիսուս Ինքն է ճշմարտութիւնը: Ան ցոյց տուաւ ճշմարիտ կեանքը:

Հաւատացեալը կանչուած է Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսով, Անոր ցոյց տուած ու ապրած ճշմարիտ կեանքով, ամրացնելի մեջքը, որպէսզի չիյնայ ու չսայթաքի չարին ճիրաններուն մէջ:

## 2. Արդարութեան Չրահը Հագնիլ:

Տէր Յիսուս ինքն է Արդարը: Անոր ապրած կեանքը արդարութեան կեանք էր: Ան դիմադրեց բոլոր անոնց որոնք անարդարութեան մէջ էին: Ան եղաւ ինկածին, տկարին, գրկուածին, ճշուածին, հիւանդին ու սգաւորին հետ: Մէկ խօսքով Ան եղաւ անարդարութեան զոհ եղող մարդոց հետ:

Այս անարդար եւ «անտառ»ի վերածուած աշխարհին մէջ, հաւատացեալը կանչուած է Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսի արդարութեան զրահը հագնիլ եւ արդարութեան համար պայքարիլ յատկապէս՝ անարդարութեան եւ անարդարներուն դէմ:

## 3. Հաւատքին Վահանը Առնել:

Առաքելաւ կը շեշտէ. «Ամէն բանի վրայ հաւատքին վահանը առէ՛ք, որով կարող պիտի ըլլաք չարին բոլոր կրակոտ նետերը մարել» (հ. 17):

Առանց Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսի վրայ ունեցած մեր հաւատքին, բնական պիտի ըլլայ չարին կրակոտ նետերուն յանձնուիլ եւ կքիլ:

Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսի վրայ խարսխուած ու հաստատուած հաւատքն է որ հաւատացեալը ոչ թէ միայն պիտի պաշտպանէ չարէն այլ՝ հաւատքով՝ չարին կրակոտ նետերը պիտի մարին: Տէր Յիսուս կ'ըսէ. «Եթէ մանանեխի հատի չափ հաւատք ունենաք... բան մը անհնարին պիտի չըլլայ ձեզի» (Մատթ. 17:19):

Իրականութեան մէջ, Քրիստոնէութեան հիմքը՝ գիտակից հաւատքն է: Հաւատք՝ թէ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսն է միակ Փրկիչը մարդ արարածին:

Եթէ աշխարհի կ'ուզէ խաղաղութիւն, պէտք է իւրաքանչիւր անձ գիտակցի թէ միայն Յարուցեալ Փրկիչն է՝ խաղաղութեան իշխանը, որ կարող է խաղաղութիւն եւ արդարութիւն շնորհել մարդ արարածին եւ ամբողջ աշխարհին: Որովհետեւ սերը յաղթեց եւ պիտի յաղթէ չարին:

Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսի վրայ ունեցած մեր հաւատքը այնպիսի վահան մըն է ուր չարին ոչ մէկ կրակոտ նետերը

կարող կ'ըլլան թափանցելու եւ մեր սիրտը գրաւելու ու մեղցնելու:

Այլ ընդհակառակը, Յարուցեալ Քրիստոսի վրայ ունեցած հաւատքի վահանով, չարին կրակոտ նետերը, որքան որ շատ ըլլան, ուշ կամ կանուխ, պիտի մարին եւ հաւատացեալը յաղթական պիտի ըլլայ, վկայ՝ Վարդանանացը, Տէր զօրի անապատները, Սարդարապատը, Հայաստանն ու Արցախը:

Այսօր Յարութեան տօն է: Սուրբ Չատիկ: Քրիստոս գերեզմանին մէջ չէ: Ան Յարութիւն առած է: Յիշենք նաեւ թէ Իր Հրաշափառ Յարութեամբ Ան յարուցանեց Հայ ազգը Ցեղասպանութենէն՝ Տէր զօրի անապատներէն եւ կ'ապրի մեր մէջ ու կը հարցնէ. «Ինչո՞ւ խռոված էք... Ես Ձեզի հետ եմ»:

Իսկ եթէ կը հաւատանք թէ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս մեզի հետ է, ուրեմն՝ ինչո՞ւ խռովիմք, վախնանք, յուսահատինք եւ ընկճուիմք:

Վստահ եւ քաջասիրտ ըլլանք:

Երբ Յարուցեալ Քրիստոս մեզի հետ է, մէկը չի կրնար մեզի հակառակ կենալ: «Եթէ Աստուած մեր կողմն է, ո՞վ պիտի ըլլայ մեզի հակառակ:» Հռովմ. 8: 31

Եկէք այս հաստատ ու գիտակից հաւատքով, յոյսով, վստահութեամբ եւ քաջասիրտութեամբ գօտենալորուիմք ու միաբանութեամբ, սիրով եւ ուրախութեամբ շնորհաւորենք զիրար ըսելով.

**«ՔՐԻՍՏՈՍ ՅԱՐԵԱՒ Ի ՄԵՌԵԼՈՑ,  
ՕՐՀՆԵԱԼ Ե ՅԱՐՈՒԹԻՒՆՆ ՔՐԻՍՏՈՍԻ»:  
ԱՄԵՆ**



\* Վեր. Սերոբ Մկրտիչեան Աւագ  
Հովին Ե Բասատինայի Կիլիկիա Հայ  
Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի:

# Ողորմութիւն եւ Շնորհք

*Համարձակութիւնով մօտենանք շնորհքի աթոռին, որպէսզի ողորմութիւն ընդունինք  
եւ շնորհք գտնենք՝ պէտք եղած ատեն մեզի օգնելու: Եբր. 4. 16*

Վեր. Սարգիս Օշինյան\*

**Ե**րբ ինձ հարց են տալիս, թէ ի՞նչ փոխուեց քո մէջ Արցախեան երկրորդ պատերազմից յետոյ, իմ պատասխանն է՝ շատ բաներ, բայց առաջին հերթին՝ պատկերացումներս Տէրոջ ողորմութեան եւ շնորհքի մասին: Չնայած նրան, որ 28 տարուան ապաշխարութեան կեանք ունեմ, որից 4 տարին աստուածաբանական կրթութիւն եւ 15 տարին հովուական փորձառութիւն, Տէրոջ ողորմութիւնն ու շնորհքը նո՛ր իմաստ ստացան

ինձ համար Արցախի 44-օրուայ պատերազմի ժամանակ եւ մանաւանդ դրա վերջում:

2020-ի Սեպտեմբերի 27-ը ոչ-սովորական սկսուեց նաեւ ինձ համար: Վաղ առաւօտից ինձ էին զանգահարում տարբեր ընկերներ, բարեկամներ, ու հարցնում թէ արդեօք տեղեակ եմ, որ պատերազմ է սկսուել, եւ ի միջի այլոց հարցնում, Ալէնը՝ տղաս, զանգահարել է արդեօք այսօր, թէ՛ ոչ: Արդէն հետագայում ես իմացայ, որ նրանք բոլորն աւելի են տեղեկացուած եղել եւ իմացել, որ պատերազմի



առաջին հարուածը թշնամին հասցրել է Շուշիին, որտեղ ծառայում էր Ալէնը, եւ արդէն Գորիս վիրաւորներ են բերել:

Պաշտամունքը անցաւ անսովոր, բոլորիս աղօթքներն ու միտքը պատերազմն էր, եւ մանաւանդ՝ մեր ծառայող զաւակները: Սկզբում ինձ թուում էր, թէ սա հերթական վրիպեցուցիչ («դիւերսիոն») գործողութիւններ են թշնամու կողմից, եւ մի քանի ժամ անց ամէն բան կը հանդարտուի: Երբ կէսօրին Գորիսից տեսանք թէ ինչպէս դրդիւնով երկինք բարձրացան մեր հակաօդային պաշտպանութեան հրթիռները ու կարդացինք լուրերը, թէ ինչպէս թշնամին ռմբակոծել է մայրաքաղաք Ստեփանակերտը եւ Շուշի քաղաքը, որտեղ ծառայում էր տղաս, ամէն բան փոխուեց: Ես ու կինս վերադարձանք եկեղեցի, ծունկի եկանք եւ միայն մէկ բան կարողացայ աղօթել. «Տէ՛ր, ողորմի՛ր քո արարածներին եւ ինձ՝ բազմամեղիս. ողորմի՛ր մեր զինուորներին եւ Ալէնին»:

Այնուհետ սկսուեց փախստականների չվերջացող հոսքը, որոնց պէտք էր տեղաւորել, կերակրել, կացարան փնտռել: Նրանց մէկը միւսից աւելի ահասարսուռ պատմութիւնները ահագնացող պատերազմի եւ մեր զոհերի մասին՝ միայն մէկ բան էր ստիպում – աղօթել. «Տէ՛ր, ողորմի՛ր քո արարածներին եւ ինձ՝ բազմամեղիս. ողորմի՛ր մեր զինուորներին եւ Ալէնին»: Օրէ օր լուրերը աւելի ու աւելի էին վատանում թշնամու առաջխաղացման պատճառով: Տղաս զանգահարում էր օրը մէկ անգամ, խօսում շատ կարճ, փորձում հանգստացնել մեզ: Մենք ապրում էինք բառիս բուն իմաստով զանգից զանգ: Ամէն անգամ զանգից յետոյ փառք էի տալիս Աստծուն, եւ յաջորդ պահին նորից աղօթում...:

Հոկտեմբերի 8 կամ 9 էր, երբ ինձ մեր Գիւմրիի ընկերներից մէկը խնդրեց որ այցելեմ Գորիսի դիպերծարանը եւ հնարաւորութեան դէպքում ճանաչեմ իր տղայի դին, ով զոհուել էր պատերազմի առաջին օրերին: Այն ինչի ականատես եղայ ես այնտեղ, անհնար է արտայայտել բառերով: Մինչ այդ մասնակցել էի բազմաթիւ զինուորների յուղարկաւորութիւնների, թէ՛ բարեկամների, թէ՛ իմ ընկերների զաւակների: Այդ բոլորից միայն մէկ բան հասկացայ, որ անկախ նրանից թէ որտեղ ես գտնուում Արցախում, ողջ մնալը հաւասարազօր պէտք է լինէր հրաշքի:

Հոկտեմբերի 19-ին Արցախի նախագահը ելոյթ ունեցաւ հեռուստատեսութեամբ եւ յայտարարեց որ թշնամին մի քանի քիլոմէթր է հեռու Շուշիից: Այդ լուրը տակնուվրայ արեց առանց այն էլ մեր վիրաւոր ու կտորած հոգիները: Ալէնի հետ հերթական կարճ խօսակցութեան ժամանակ հեռախօսի մէջ լսեցի արկի ձայնը՝ թէ ինչպէս եկաւ ու պայթեց, որից յետոյ տղաս անջատեց հեռախօսը՝ խօսակցութիւնը դեռ չաւարտած: Ես հասկացայ որ հնարաւոր է այլեւս չտեսնեմ իմ որդուն. բայց մէկ բան կայ, որ պէտք է կառչեմ եւ լինի միակ իմ յոյսը՝ Տէրոջ ողորմութիւնն ու շնորհքը: Ես ո՛չ մի արժանիք չունեմ խնդրելու Տէրոջից, որ պահպանի Ալէնի եւ մեր միւս զինուորների կեանքը, բայց միայն Տէրոջ շնորհքով կարող եմ նրա ողորմութեանը ապաւինել: Մէկ օր անց նորից զանգ ստանալ եւ լսել տղայիս՝ որ իր հետ ամէն բան կարգին է, ինձ համար Տէրոջ ողորմութեան ու շնորհքի վկայութիւնն էր:

Հոկտեմբերի 22-ին՝ իմ եւ կնոջս պսակած եւ ժահրի քննութեան պատասխանը դրական եկաւ: Մենք ստիպուած էինք 14 օր մեկուսանալ մեր տանը: Աշխարհից կտրուած մեր կեանքը ամփոփուած էր 3 բանի մէջ՝ ապաստում զանգի, լուրեր, եւ անդադար աղօթք՝ գիշեր ու ցերեկ. «Տէ՛ր, ողորմի՛ր մեր զինուորներին եւ Ալէնին»: Մինչեւ Նոյեմբերի 5-ը՝ տղաս իր դասակի հետ մնաց Շուշիում: Նոյեմբերի



Վեր. Սարգիս Օջինյան իր տիկնոջ Արմինէի հետ:

6-ին նրանք ստիպուած էին թողնել իրենց դիրքերը՝ շրջափակման մէջ չընկնելու համար: Այդ մասին մենք իմացանք պատերազմի աւարտից շատ օրեր անց: Ինչպէս նաեւ իմացայ, ի հարկէ ոչ Ալէնից, այլ նրա ընկերներից, թէ ինչպէս Աստուած հրաշքով բազմաթիւ անգամներ փրկել է իրենց եւ Ալէնին անխուսափելի թուացող մահից:

Դեկտեմբերի 16-ին ես մեկնեցի Ստեփանակերտ՝ հովուական գործերով: Այցելեցի մեր ընկերներից մէկին, ով դրանից մէկ շաբաթ առաջ մի քանի ժամով Ալէնին կանչել էր իրենց տուն, որպէսզի Ալէնը կարողանայ լղանալ եւ հագուստները լուանալ: Երբ պատրաստուում էի վերադառնալ, տանտիկինը մօտեցաւ ինձ եւ լաց լինելով ինձ յանձնեց ինքնաշխատ հրացանի մի փամփուշտ: Իմ զարմացած հայեացքին ի պատասխան՝ Նա ասաց, որ լուացքի ժամանակ փամփուշտը ընկել է Ալէնի զինուորական բաճկոնի գրպանից, որտեղ առանձին դրուած է եղել, հասկանալի է ի՛նչ նպատակի համար...: Նա միայն աւելացրեց, որ չի կարողացել փամփուշտը դնել իր նոյն տեղում եւ ահա՛ փոխանցում է ինձ:

Այժմ ես այդ փամփուշտը կրում եմ իմ հովուական վերնաշապիկի գրպանում, որպէսզի ամէն անգամ յիշեմ Տէրոջ ողորմութիւնն ու շնորհքը մեր հանդէպ, որպէսզի ես եւս շնորհք եւ ողորմութիւն ցոյց տամ դրա կարիքն ունեցող մարդկանց, որպէսզի անընդհատ յիշեմ որ ես ու կինս ոչնչով առաւել չէինք եւ չենք այն հազարաւոր ծնողներից, որոնց որդիները զոհուեցին պատերազմի ժամանակ: «Յիշատակն արդարոց օրհնութեամբ եղիցի», եւ խոնարհուամս բոլոր նահատակների ծնողներին:

Ինչո՞ւ Տէրը պահեց մեր տղայի եւ իր ընկերների կեանքը, երբ շուրջ բոլորը մահն էր սփռուած, ես չեմ կարող ասել: Բայց միայն կարող եմ ասել, որ դա Տէրոջ ողորմութիւնն ու շնորհքն է, որի համար չեմ դադարում շնորհակալութիւն յայտնել եւ փառք տալ Տէրոջը:

\* Վեր. Սարգիս Օջինյան Հովին է Կորիսի Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի:

# Արեւմտահայերէնի Ուղղագրութեան եւ Կետադրութեան Նուիրում Նոր Հատոր մը

**Ա**մերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը (AMAA) ուրախ է յայտարարելու, թէ իր խրախուսանքով ու հովանաւորութեամբ Հայէպի մէջ լոյս ընծայուեցաւ արեւմտահայերէնի ուղղագրութեան եւ կետադրութեան նուիրում հանրամատչելի նոր ուղեցոյց մը: Նորատիպ հատորը, որ 156 էջ է, կը կրէ «Գրականաշունչ պոռոյտ»՝ այբուբենի տառերուն հետ» խորագիրը: Գիրքին հեղինակն է հայէպահայ ծանօթ գրող, մամլոյ աշխատակից ու կրթական մշակ պր. Լեւոն Շառոյեան:

Հատորը իր բնոյթով թեւեւ գերազանցապէս քերականական գործ մը մը նկատուի, սակայն գրի առնուած է դիւրամատչելի լեզուով ու կրնայ ընթերցանութեան գիրքի մը պէս հազասահ կարդացուիլ՝ իր մայրենի լեզուն բարելաւելու եւ անոր ուղղագրական կանոններուն ծանօթանալու ցանկութիւն ունեցող ամէն տարիքի հայորդիի կողմէ: Սակայն անիկա մասնաւորաբար օգտակար պիտի ըլլայ սփիւռքահայ վարժարաններու հայերէնաւանդ ուսուցիչներուն, բարձրագոյն կարգերու աշակերտներուն եւ հայագիտական հիմնարկներու ուսանողներուն:

Հատորին յառաջաբանը ստորագրած է լիբանանահայ ծանօթ քերականագետ տոքթ. Արմենակ Եղիայեան: Ան նկատել կու տայ որ «ներկայ հաւաքածոն առաջին անգամ կը թուի ըլլալ ուղղագրական մէկ սեղմ ուղեցոյցը արեւմտահայերէնի ամենայաճախուած ու երբեմն անյադաբար թուող սխալներուն, սակայն հազիւ քանի մը էջ խորացած՝ ընթերցողը կ'անդրադառնայ, որ ուղղագրական կարեւոր գիտելիք մը իւրացնելու կողքին՝ վերահասու դարձաւ նաեւ գրական, պատմական, մշակութային բազմաթիւ գիտելիքներու, որոնց այլապէս դժուար թէ առիթը ունենար այսպէս ընտրովի ու համատեղ հանդիպելու, եւ ան ամէն քայլին պիտի վարձատրուի գեղեցիկ գիտով մը ու խելացի առաջարկով մը»:

Իսկ հատորին հեղինակը իր նախաբանին մէջ կը բացատրէ, թէ այս գործին ձեռնարկեց, որովհետեւ ուսուցչական իր երկարամեայ պաշտօնավարութեան ընթացքին միշտ ցաւով կ'անդրադառնար, թէ հայկական երկրորդական վարժարաններու բարձրագոյն կարգերու շրջանաւարտութեան թեկնածուները ջախջախիչ մեծամասնութեամբ իրենց մայրենի լեզուն անթերի ուղղագրութեամբ գրելու անկարող եղած էին...:

Ճիշդ այս մէկնակետէն ճամբայ ելլելով՝ Շառոյեան ձեռնարկած է սոյն աշխատասիրութեան պատրաստութեան: Ան հմտօրէն սեւեռումի ենթարկած է հայոց այբուբենէն 21 տառեր՝ իրենց յարուցած ուղղագրական բարդութիւններով: Այս երկու տասնեակ տառերը, զոյգ առ զոյգ վերցուած, այբուբենի այն գիրերն են, որոնք ուղղագրական համակարգին մէջ նմանահնչին են.-- բաղաձայններէն՝ Բ-Փ, Գ-Զ, Դ-Թ, Զ-Յ, Զ-Տ, Ռ-Ր, Կ-Է, իսկ ձայնաւորներէն՝ Ե-Է եւ Ռ-Օ, որոնց վրայ իբրեւ 21-րդ տառ կ'աւելնայ «Ը» գիրը, որ շփոթի առարկայ կը դառնայ իր ստուերին՝ «սուղ ըթ»-ին սարքած խաղերուն պատճառաւ...: Ուրեմն, գործին հիմնական նպատակն է կարելի եղած չափով դարմանել մեր ուղղագրական սխալները եւ ուղիներ ցոյց տալ՝ յաղթահարելու համար նմանահնչին տառերէն ծնունդ առնող ուղղագրական դժուարութիւնները:

Նորատիպ գիրքը միայն ուղղագրական ուղեցոյց չէ սակայն: Անիկա ունի երկու այլ երեսներ եւս:

Նախ՝ բառագիտութիւն: Հեղինակը, մասնակի կերպով, բազմաթիւ նմանահնչին բառերու վրայ հակելով իր գլուխը, կը վերծանէ կամ կը ստուգաբանէ զանոնք՝ ցոյց տալով հայերէն բառերու կազմութեան գաղտնիքները...: Ան շատ հետաքրքրական գիտերու դեմ-յանդիման կը թողու իր ընթերցողները:

Յետոյ՝ կետադրութիւն: Այս ալ ուրիշ խոցելի կէտ մըն է մեր դպրոցականներուն մօտ, որովհետեւ բաւարար չափով կամ կարեւորութեամբ չ'ուսուցուի մեր վարժարաններուն մէջ: Գիրքը շուրջ 20 էջ յատկացուցած է հայերէնի կետադրական նշաններուն, մանրամասն բացատրելով իւրաքանչիւր նշանի գործածութեան օրէնքներն ու ոլորտները եւ բոլորին համար տալով բազմաթիւ տպաւորիչ օրինակներ:

Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը, որ իր մէկ դարեայ պատմութեան ընթացքին միշտ ու տեւաբար կանգնած է հայ դպրոցին ու հայ ուսանողին կողքին, կը հաւատայ, որ քերականութեան նորատիպ այս գիրքով նպաստած կ'ըլլայ արեւմտահայերէնի վերածաղկումին ու կենսունակութեան եւ օգտակար գործիք մը դրած կ'ըլլայ մեր հայախօս ու հայագիր հանրութեան ձեռքը:

Գիրքէն օրինակ մը ունենալու կարելիութեան համար հաճեցէք հեռաձայնել Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Կեդրոնատեղին - Հեռ. 201.265.2607: 📞





# *Ever Onward/Ohn Haratch*

## By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

Book Reviewed by **Arthur Salibian, M.D.**

**T**he title of Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian's 46th book, *Ever Onward/Ohn Haratch*, has been aptly chosen in times of spiritual, physical and environmental uncertainties. As Rev. Tootikian points out in the Preface, the title denotes "moving forward to new horizons" in spite of these unprecedented challenges. The book's 43 articles cover various topics dealing with spiritual, social, political and historical issues. These articles should be read through the lens of "moving forward," as each article in its own way shows us the path to those horizons.

Foremost, and pertaining to the Christian faith, Rev. Tootikian discusses biblical stories and narratives in more than 16 articles for a personal commitment to follow in Christ's footsteps and seek His Kingdom first. Emphasized is a personal God that reveals "the way" forward through His Son Jesus Christ.

What follows the personal commitment is the importance of seeking an unfettered education that pursues the truth. Here we are reminded of John Milton's *Areopagitica* that criticizes restrictions placed on education by governing authorities. Milton affirms the Freedom to express one's opinion and use the faculty of reason to seek the Truth.

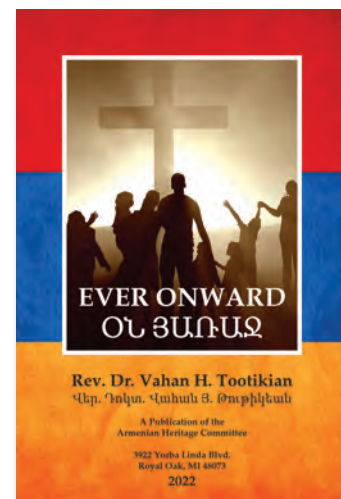
As in previous publications, Rev. Tootikian covers particular topics in the history of the Armenian church and the Armenian Evangelical movement. In this book, we are reminded of the Holy Translators of the fifth century who created the Armenian alphabet and translated the Bible into Armenian. Both achievements ushered in the "Golden Age of Armenian Literature."

The Armenian Evangelical Church in the 19th century accepted, as other Protestant churches did, the personal reading of the Bible and its interpretation regarding "faith and practice." Rev. Tootikian reviews the "Cardinal Principles" of Armenian Evangelicals' faith that has been passed onto future generations.

Two articles are dedicated to women's roles in the Armenian Evangelical community and its churches. The women's role as educators and leaders in the churches has been positive steps. In contrast, the women's role as ordained church ministers has stalled. Today, unlike other Protestant churches, Armenian Evangelical churches have taken a step backward in refusing the ordination of women.

With regard to politics, Rev. Tootikian reviews Armenia's Third Republic history and the 2020 Artsakh War that has shaped Armenia's politics. The despair that has engulfed the country after the war requires taking a "hard look at missed opportunities" that are vital "for a better outcome" and renewed prosperity. Knowledge of our past is the road to progress. These are only a small sample of the many topics that Rev. Tootikian covers in his book *Ever Onward/Ohn Haratch*. Each of the 43 articles discussed may be considered as a "stand alone" subject that is linked by a thread that gives a choice to move forward. The positive steps are clarified in each article.

We are fortunate to have Rev. Dr. Tootikian's pen continue to teach us what the Armenian Evangelical movement stands for. Likewise, we are indebted to him for his contributions to the literature of the Armenian Evangelical Church at a time when its leaders' ink seems to have dried up. 🇺🇸





# Haigazian University Press

**E**ven though Haigazian University has published academic volumes for several decades, the establishment of the Haigazian University Press (HU Press) in 2011 boosted both the rhythm and scope of its publications. HU Press has an impressive list of publications, despite the various challenges it faces in a turbulent Middle East and economically unstable Lebanon.

This year HU Press has scheduled to publish several books, including the proceedings of two conferences: Centennial of Greater Lebanon: Constituting the Idea of a "Lebanese Identity," Perspectives from the Lebanese Arts and Letters, and Armenians of Egypt, the editorials of Vahan Tekeyan published in the Cairo-based Arev daily between 1915 and 1945, and the 42nd volume of the Haigazian Armenological Review.

Waiting for the opportunity to be published are a number of academic studies including those focusing on the history of the Lebanese Armenian community as well as the Armenian Genocide.

## Books may be ordered from:

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*Established in 1955 by the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, Haigazian University is the only Armenian higher education institution in the Diaspora supported by the AMAA.*



***Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*** Revelation 14:13

**The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.**

Marie Alberian  
Weehawken, NJ

\* Robert Avian  
Kent, CT

\* Mugurdich Balabanian, M.D.  
Sherman Oaks, CA

\* Carol Ann Azadian  
Weston, MA

\* Astreed Bagdoian  
Westboro, MA

\* Jack Boyajian  
Natick, MA

\* Samuel Devejian  
Collingswood, NJ

\* John Doursounian  
Westwood, MA

\* Aram Yavruyan Grosse  
Pointe Park, MI

\* Dorothy Gulezian  
Brockton, MA

Vahack & Elizabeth Haroutunian  
Fresno, CA

\* Richard Janoyan  
Hillsdale, NJ

\* Rev. James Kizirian  
Novato, CA

James Mukhalian  
King of Prussia, PA

\* Lucy Parseghian  
Hermosa Beach, CA

\* Alice (Alyce) Tamzarian  
Boulder, CO

\* *Memorial donations designated for AMAA*



## Raymond Vartan Avedian

Raymond "Radar" Vartan Avedian of Fresno, CA passed away on November 18, 2021. He was 93.

"Radar" was born in Fresno to George and Lily from Van, Armenia, who preceded him in death (1971, 1999) along with his younger brother, Leonard (2001). He graduated from Fresno High School and Fresno State University, earning a bachelor's degree in agriculture specializing in animal husbandry. He honorably served in the Army during WWII and taught secondary education before his long career as a Rabies Control Officer in the Fresno County Health Department.

Radar was highly active in several churches, attending three services each Sunday. His love of the Lord and value of prayer and scripture was central in his life, and secondarily, his great love for horses and ranching.

A lifelong passion, he fastidiously read and knew everything about equines and ranching from livestock to the land. At age 90, he purchased a cowhide to craft a saddle. He was a faithful attendee of the Clovis Rodeo, a fixture in church, enjoyed his '66 Chevy Impala and car shows with best friend Bob Scory, and was the family historian.

He affably loved keeping relations with friends and family, even childhood neighbors, meeting friends and having good conversation. Even when he was crossed by others, he genuinely prayed for them. A lifelong Fresnan and supporter of veterans, he led the neighborhood watch group. He left his mark on others by his love for wanting what is right, true, good and faithful to his Lord, and his being ever faithful in prayer.

He is survived by his sister-in-law and nieces, Boni, Krissy and Gabrielle, first cousins Norman and Richard among many other cousins, and his close friend of many years, Darlene Martin.

He will be missed by many, but we rejoice with him that he is in the presence of the Lord, and we will see him again in the resurrection. His primary life purpose was to be a faithful son, brother, and servant to the Lord, but he proclaimed that he was not righteous in his own right; that his salvation was purchased by God when he trusted in Christ's righteousness to atone for sins instead of trusting in his own ability, so that no one may boast of their works. Now he has been transferred from the rolls of the Church militant to that of the Church triumphant.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Donations may be made in Raymond's name to the Armenian Missionary Association of America. 🇺🇸



## Grace Aynedjian Dr. Hagop (Jack) Aynedjian

Grace Aynedjian passed away on August 17, 2020, and Dr. Hagop (Jack) Aynedjian passed away on October 30, 2021. Grace and Jack resided at Willow Valley Communities in Lancaster, PA.

Grace was born in New York City to the late Nazar and Margaret Nazarian who were missionaries to the Middle East until 1947. Grace worked for Curtis Wright Corporation and then for the Paramus Board of Education. She met Jack Aynedjian who was a Barrington College student in Rhode Island and they were married in 1959. He continued his education at New York University in NYC. After graduation, he was accepted to be a member of the faculty of both NYU Medical Center and Albert Einstein Medical College, teaching microsurgery to post graduate medical doctors.

Both Grace and Jack were born-again Christians and as such, their "Supreme Purpose" in life was to be used by the Lord to spread the Good News of the Gospel everywhere they went. Jack spent a significant amount of his free time preaching and conducting Bible studies in many churches, homes and rescue missions, both on the East Coast and in California. Grace, with her love of Jesus, talented voice, and warm and caring personality, participated in many God-honoring activities.

The Lord blessed them with three wonderful children: James (married to Amy Runion), John, and Sharon (married to Dana Barkdoll) and four grandchildren: David, Jesse, Sierra and Nathan and recently with a great-grandchild, Jacob, from David and Chrissy.

In 2005 they retired to Willow Valley Communities where Grace had a very active life. She loved singing and gardening but above all she, like her husband and parents, tried her best to reach the unsaved with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To achieve this desire of hers, she and her best friend, Carol, would take roses to many patients, witness to them and encourage them to get well both physically and spiritually. Grace and Jack attended Monterey Chapel as their spiritual home since 2005 and were much blessed by the warm-hearted saints of the church members.

Grace leaves a brother, John (Millie) who lives in New Jersey. She was preceded in death by a brother, Jeremiah (Jerry). Grace went to be with the Lord peacefully with her husband at her side as she took her last breath and entered her eternal home. Jack's final wish was to be buried next to his beloved sweetheart Grace so that on the day of resurrection, they would "hold hands" together and "fly away" to the very presence of their most adoring and beloved Savior. 🇺🇸



## Araxie Akiprikan Boloyan

Araxie Akiprikan Boloyan of Cranston, RI passed away peacefully on February 3, 2022 at the age of 91. Born on July 31, 1930 in Charvieu, France, east of Lyon, to the late Garabed and Nevart Akiprikan originally from western Armenia of the former Ottoman Empire, she was the youngest of 3 girls – Rachel Ohanessian (husband Yeghia) and Elise Juy (husband Roger), all pre-deceased.

Araxie grew up and went to school in Lyon where her father had his own shoe cobbler business. She was very studious and took advantage of the opportunities presented to her. Her pursuit of knowledge and her natural intelligence would serve her well throughout her life. Like many of her generation, she desired to move to America and find new opportunities for herself. In January 1955, she came to the US and lived with her uncle in New York City. While in the US, she took a job as a nanny and later briefly moved to Stratford, CT to help her relatives, the Yakoubians, tend to their 3 kids after their oldest was stricken with polio.

At 26 years old, she was eager to find more permanent work to attain independence. She applied for and was offered a secretarial position at the United Nations after successfully passing the entrance exam. Her fluency in both French and English gave her the opportunity to work with foreign dignitaries who needed her dual language background. Her job required travel to Europe on behalf of the UN.

On June 6, 1965 she married her love Vartan Boloyan, with whom she spent over 54 years together before his passing in 2020. Araxie and Vartan had a lot in common. They both were the first of their families to emigrate to the US from France, their parents were Genocide survivors, they both spoke French and Armenian fluently, and they loved their native France but cherished the life, opportunity, and future the US offered to them. They settled in Providence, RI and had three children, Carl, Lynn and Liz. In August 1970, they would buy a home in Cranston where they resided until their passing.

Araxie devoted herself to her family. She was very loving and caring, always giving her children and grandchildren big hugs and kisses and expecting the same in return. People who met her always found her to be very kind, compassionate and caring. Her life dedicated to her family was her legacy.

Although she was brought up Catholic, Araxie attended and devoted her time to the Armenian Evangelical Church in Providence and Cranston, RI. As her family still resided in France, her new Rhode Island family embraced her as one of their own. This same dedication and devo-



tion to both church and family was passed on to her own children and grandchildren.

Araxie leaves behind a very large family including her children, Carl Boloyan, Lynn Tatewosian, and Liz Hathaway, and their respective spouses Rachel Abrahamian Boloyan, William Tatewosian, and Joseph Hathaway; her 7 beautiful grandchildren, Lucine, David, and Anna Boloyan, William and Victoria Tatewosian, and Joshua and Arianna Hathaway.

Funeral services were held on February 12, 2022 at the Armenian Evangelical Church in Cranston, RI, followed by burial at Swan Point Cemetery, Providence. Donations in her memory may be made to the Armenian Evangelical Church of RI or the AMAA. 🇺🇸

## Ardemis Ejdaharian

Ardemis (Arda) Ejdaharian passed away peacefully on December 17, 2021 in Clovis, CA. She was 91.

Ardemis was born on May 8, 1930 in Beirut, Lebanon to Megerdich and Elise (Ashjian) Ejdaharian. She was raised in a loving family with three other siblings – Araxie Karamanoukian, Haig and Armine Bilezikjian.

As a medical doctor, her father heeded the call of his profession to serve others. The family moved frequently from Beirut to Iskenderoun, back to Beirut then to Gaza with a brief time in Kirkuk, Iraq. Ardemis eventually returned to Lebanon in the mid-1950s.

During these moves, Ardemis also got the call to help others and entered the nursing profession serving with great dedication for the rest of her professional life. She and her sister Armine emigrated to the United States in 1961 where she joined the nursing staff of Providence St. Joseph's Hospital in Burbank, CA. She retired from nursing in 1993 but her heart and soul never left the profession.

In addition to her love for her family, her interests included travel and classical music. She could often be heard humming arias from her favorite operas.

Ardemis attended the United Armenian Congregational Church (UACC) in Los Angeles, CA and was also a life-long supporter of the AMAA.

Ardemis will be remembered as a dedicated and loving daughter and sister. She will be missed as a loving aunt by her nephews, Bernard and Zaven Karian and niece, Aline Karamanoukian-Christiansen and their families.

Funeral services were held on January 11, 2022 at the Old North Church at Forest Lawn Memorial Mortuary in Hollywood Hills, CA. Memorial contributions may be made to UACC or to the AMAA. 🇺🇸



## Zarouhie Jamgotchian

Zarouhie "Susie" Jamgotchian passed away on November 19, 2021 after a long and extraordinary life, at the age of 94.

Born on October 28, 1927 in the town of Kala-dooran, in Kessab, Syria, Susie was the fourth child of Zeron and Ferida Yarian. She grew up on the family farm, but being the fourth daughter, her older sisters took care of the household chores.

When the Great Depression spread worldwide, Susie's mother found she could no longer care for her daughters while also working the farm. She placed six-year-old Susie and her three older sisters in an orphanage in Beirut, Lebanon. When the family got back on its feet, Susie's mother picked up her daughters from the orphanage and the family went back to Kessab. There, the family continued to grow, with the birth of three more daughters, including twins, along with a son who died in infancy.

Even at an early age, education was very important to Susie as she begged her father to let her go to school. In 1943, the family moved to Beirut permanently, allowing Susie to attend the Armenian Evangelical High School. Since Susie excelled in her studies, the school hired her as one of their teachers after graduation. She also became part of the alumni association where she took an active role in the organization. While serving as the secretary for the association, she met her future husband, John Hovannes Jamgotchian, who was the association's treasurer. They were married on July 3, 1948, and continued to reside in Beirut. In 1958, John was granted a visa to America only to have it lost to bureaucratic complications. Not willing to wait any longer, they decided to emigrate to Canada to join John's older sister, Irene, in Toronto. Upon their arrival they became involved with the Armenian community. In 1960, John and four of his newly immigrated friends and their wives founded the first Armenian Evangelical Church in Toronto, Canada.

Their dream to live in California came to fruition in 1962 and they became members of the United Armenian Congregational Church in Los Angeles and served the Church in various offices and committees. Susie loved to garden and enjoyed family camping trips. At the encouragement of her sister, Joyce, who was already a registered nurse, she pursued a nursing career. After completing some night school science classes, she was admitted to the Registered Nursing program at Los Angeles Valley College in Van Nuys, graduating the same year as her daughters who graduated from college and high school. Susie continued in the nursing field as a private duty nurse.

Eventually Susie joined her husband, John, in retirement allowing them to travel. Over the years they visited more than 70 countries all over the world. The most important things in



life for her were her faith and her family. She was married to John for 68 years and widowed five years ago.

She is survived by her three children Nora Jamgotchian, Lena (Edward) Marderosian, and John (Diana) Jamgotchian; five grandchildren, Megan and Nicole Marderosian and Jayna, James (Taline) and Jessie Jamgotchian two younger sisters, Kohar Avedikian and Knar Goulian; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral services were held on January 7, 2022, at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills, CA. Memorial donations can be made to the AMAA Orphan and Child Care program. 🇺🇸

## Van Manuel Kassouni

Van Manuel Kassouni of Cascade, MI passed away peacefully November 23, 2021. He was 58.

Van was born February 6, 1963 in Jamestown, NY to Sarkis Manuel and Olivette (Trevannion) Kassouni. He moved with his family to East Grand Rapids, MI where he graduated high school in 1981. Van was an entrepreneur, inventor and businessman of extraordinary talent. While getting his start in the family business, he was largely self-taught. There was nothing he wouldn't take on. From starting his own business in molding and stamping, he expanded to own restaurants, manufacturing facilities, as well as property investment in areas of development long before they were recognized by the market. He held over 30 patents and was working on several more as illness began to take its toll. Van had a bigger than life personality and was loyal to a fault. Throughout his life he gave back and helped friends in need.

Van was an avid traveler. He and his wife Luba traveled the world with their children on trips to Europe, Russia, China, New Zealand and many warm islands in the winter months. When not traveling, Van was always trying something new. From acquiring antique steam tractors to teaching his son how to fish, he was always ready for a new adventure.

Taken way too young, Van lived life to the fullest. He is survived by his wonderful wife, caregiver, and biggest advocate Lyubov (Luba), his children he adored, Stefanie, Alexandra, and Arthur, his brothers Dicran (Irina) and Armen (Kimberly), and his sister-in-law Ann Kassouni. His larger family of nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles extends around the globe. He is reunited in Heaven with both parents and his brother Haig.

A memorial service was held on December 4, 2021 at Cascade Christian Church with Pastor Jill Forton officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of choice. 🇺🇸





## Armine Beatrice Mardigian

Armine Beatrice Mardigian, long-time and dear member of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, passed away on November 29, 2021. She was 107.

Born November 12, 1914 in Washington Heights, NYC to Logofet and Virginia Moroukian, Armine graduated from George Washington High School and then attended business school in NYC. Her first full-time job was as a secretary for a winery in downtown NYC in the late 1930s. About this time, she met Steven Mardigian at the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York. Armine and Steve were married on December 20, 1943, while Steve was serving in the US Army Signal Corps, during a one-week pass before shipping out to the Philippines.

During WW2, Armine moved to Allentown, PA to live with her parents and help with their carpet shop "Moroukian Rugs." She also worked as a secretary for Consolidated Vultee Aircraft ("Convair") Company that built airplanes for the war effort. It was during this time that her brother Armen succumbed to Hodgkin's Disease. Armine was devoted to her brother and took care of him until his passing.

After the war, Steve and Armine lived in Queens, NY. Armine and Steve were active members of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, where Armine served as the church Secretary for over 20 years. In 1951, they moved to a home in New Hyde Park in Queens where Armine lived in that same house for the rest of her life. Steve passed away in 1988.

Armine is survived by her two sons Armen and Jim Mardigian. Armen is a career Air Force vet. He and his wife Mary (nee Timms) live in Colorado. They have two daughters, Amy and Cathy, who are both married and live in Colorado. James, a career railroader, is married to Kathleen (nee O'Hara) and live in Queens, NY.

Funeral services were held on December 6, 2021 at the Thomas F. Dalton Funeral Home, North New Hyde Park, NY.



## Robert Messerlian

Robert B. "Bob Baxter" Messerlian of Cranston, RI went home to be with the Lord on January 24, 2022. He was the beloved husband of Gloria Roupenian Messerlian for 62 years. Born in Providence, RI, the son of the late Leon J. and Eugenie Y. Hazarossian Messerlian, he was a lifelong resident of Cranston.

Robert graduated from Cranston High School in 1950 and Zion Bible Institute in 1953. He was the founder of Baxter's Fine Jewelry, a former President of the Metal Findings Manufacturers Association and was a U.S. Army Korean War veteran. Among his other many interests



included boating, golfing, music, spending time with his family and Bible studies.

Most importantly, he was a faithful servant of the Lord. His faith was paramount in his life. He was a former Elder of the Cranston Christian Fellowship and Deacon of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Rhode Island. He was a past Board Member of the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

Besides his wife, Robert is survived by his children, Lisa Abbott and her husband Stephen and Paul Messerlian and his wife Geralyn. He was the cherished grandfather of Ariana and David Abbott and Janina and Nicole Messerlian and the brother of Evelyn DerMardersioian and Leon Messerlian.

Funeral services were held February 1, 2022 at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Rhode Island, followed by burial at Swan Point Cemetery, Providence.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Armenian Evangelical Church of Rhode Island or the AMAA.

## John N. Nazarian

John N. Nazarian, beloved father, grandfather, relative and friend, passed away in Los Angeles, CA on January 22, 2022. He was 84.

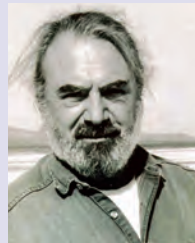
Born on December 28, 1937, John was an unsung hero and an inspiring light to everyone who knew him. He especially cared for the underappreciated and downtrodden and he deeply loved both humanity and nature.

As an avid patron and collector of Armenian art he strove to raise awareness of the Soulful Treasures of Armenia and its people, and proudly had translated into English and published a family biographical book written by his late mother, Alice Nazarian. The book is titled "Bloodied, But Unbowed: A Memoir of the Ashur and Arshaluys Yousuf Family" and was published in 2018.

John was a spiritual seeker who was also deeply creative. He loved acting, writing and cinema. Early on he starred in two Armenian films made in America, "Promise of Love" and "Debt of Blood." He graduated from the Pasadena Playhouse and Cal State Los Angeles, majoring in Theater Arts and was accepted to UCLA School of Cinema, but held off from attending to be a father. Throughout his life he traveled the world, took many wonderful photographs, touched and helped many lives, and made short subject narrative and documentary films.

Funeral services followed by interment were held on February 24, 2022 at Hollywood Hills, Forest Lawn Mortuary Park, Los Angeles, CA.

John is survived by his sons Vartan N. Nazarian and John Sayat Nova Nazarian, his grandson, Jacob Zane Nazarian, and the entire Nazarian, Darakjian, Boyadjian, Tootikian, Hamalian, Badakian, Houlian, Bosnoyan, Hovsepian (Yousouf), Markarian and Sarkissian families.



Donations may be made in honor of John to the AMAA or COAF.

## Ռոբերտ Մխիթարյան

2022 թ.-ի փետրվարի 11-ին Չայաստանյայց Ավետարանական եկեղեցին ցավալի կորուստ ունեցավ. 64 տարեկանում ծանր հիվանդությունից ի Տերնսեյթ թումանյանի Հայաստան եկավ



Ավետարանական եկեղեցիի հոգևոր հովիվ Ռոբերտ Մխիթարյանը: Մեր հոգևոր եղբոր մահն անժամանակ էր, բայց հույսը, որ նա միացել է մեր Տիրոջը, թույլ է տալիս մխիթարվել ու հիշել Առաքյալի խոսքերը, թե Տիրոջ ծառայի համար ապրելը Քրիստոս է, մեռնելը՝ Հայ (Փիլիպեցիս 1:21):

Ռոբերտ Մխիթարյանը ծնվել է 1958 թ.-ին, Թումանյան քաղաքում: 1976 թ.-ին ավարտել է տեղի միջնակարգ դպրոցը, 1977-1979 թթ. ծառայել է սովետական բանակում: 1980թ.ից սովորել է Ուկրաինայի Խարկով քաղաքի պոլիտեխնիկական ինստիտուտում և բնակվել այդ քաղաքում մինչև 1996 թ.-ը: 1996-2002 թթ. բնակվել է Գերմանիայի Շյոնբերգ քաղաքում, այնտեղ էլ գտել է Աստծուն, ապաշխարել, այնուհետև 3.5 տարի սովորել է աստվածաշնչյան քոլեջում:

Ավարտելով այն՝ 2002 թ.-ին ծառայության տեսիլքով վերադարձել է իր ծննդավայր Թումանյան: Նույն թվականին, միանալով Ամերիկայի Հայ Ավետարանական ընկերակցության գործունեությանը, լծվել է Թումանյանում Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական եկեղեցու հիմնադրման գործին: Ռոբերտ եղբայրը հաճախ էր հիշում, որ 2002 թ.-ի սեպտեմբերին, երբ տեղի ունեցավ Թումանյանի եկեղեցու առաջին պաշտամունքը, ընդամենը 4 հոգի էր ներկա: Բայց տարիների ընթացքում, Աստծո օրհնությամբ եկեղեցին աճեց, քրիստոնեական դաստիարակության ծառայություններն ընդլայնվեցին: Աստծո խոսքը տարածվեց մանուկների, պատանիների, երիտասարդների ու տարեցների շրջանում:

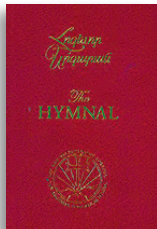
Ռոբերտ Մխիթարյանի կյանքը, ընտանեկան հարաբերություններն ու Աստծուն նվիրվածությունը վկայություն էր շատ թումանյանցիների համար, ովքեր եկեղեցում գտնում էին հովվի մխիթարությունը, աջակցությունն ու քաջալերանքն Աստծո խոսքով: Ռոբերտ Մխիթարյանն իրեն ճանաչողների սրտում կմնա որպես Աստծո հավատարիմ ծառա, կենսուրախ, հումորով, լավատես եղբայր: Նրա թողած ավանդը մեծ է, Աստծո խոսքով կրթված սերունդները Նրա ծառայության լավագույն գնահատականն են:

Ռոբերտ Մխիթարյանն ամուսնացած էր Սեդա Շահվերդյանի հետ: Նրանք ունեն 2 զավակ:

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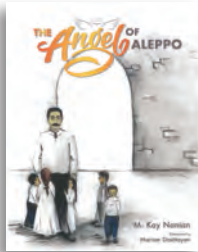
**Armenian English Diglot New Testament**  
Western Armenian and Today's English version.  
Item # 508 - Price: \$15.00



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Հոգևոր Երգարան  
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*History of AEUNA churches, their founders, locations, pastors, leaders, and programs.*  
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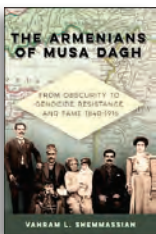
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## Received With Thanks - Հնորհակալութեամբ Ստացանք

**The AGBU Hadjin Orphanage 1919-1920 - Զ. Բ. Ը. Միութեան Հաճընի Որբանոցը 1919-1920 - Haigazian University Press - Published by The Hadjin Compatriotic Union, Lebanon**



## Bibles Behind Bars

The AMAA has been reaching inmates through the donation of Armenian Bibles. We are thankful that the word of God and hope is reaching behind bars through the work of local Chaplains. We recently received testimony that in one day, five Bibles were distributed to Armenian men in one prison ward. The need is great and the AMAA is blessed to touch these lives through the donation of Bibles.

*I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.* Matthew 25:36



## BOOKS

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# Empower Border Village Families in Armenia and Artsakh

## The Story of the Isuounts Family

**T**he Isuounts family is among the hundreds of families who were affected by the 2020 44-Day Artsakh War. They lived in Alashkert village, Kovsakan/Zangilan region, in Artsakh.

They moved to their new house before the war. But due to the war, they had to leave their house, gardens and animals. The family decided to settle in Vorotan, in Syunik region, Armenia. It is a border village and it takes much effort to reach the village as the main road is under the Azeri control.

Vanoush Isuounts and his wife Tamara have seven children, four boys and three girls. They are:  
Senik is in the 9th grade. He loves physics and dreams of becoming a driver.  
Arame is in the 8th grade. He loves chemistry and wishes to be an engineer.  
Eyner is in the 6th grade, likes to paint and dreams of being a famous painter.  
Liana is in the 1st grade. She likes to play outside.  
Amanda attends kindergarten and wants to become a policewoman.  
Razmik attends kindergarten.  
Victoria is the youngest at just 3 years old.

The children miss their friends and school. They especially miss the new house in Artsakh where they lived for only a few days. They left their village during the last days of the war.

The AMAA's Empower an Artsakh Family Program gave the Isuounts family an opportunity to stand up and start all over again. During the first quarter they purchased a sewing machine and special materials which are used for agricultural purposes to cultivate the harvest especially during mulberry harvest. Now they can sew materials of varied sizes and sell them. During the second quarter, they purchased a barn near their house and hens. Currently they are making some renovations on the barn and want to expand it. They also plan to buy pigs and other farm animals.

Empower an Artsakh Family has been a huge support for this family and many other families from Artsakh.

Please use the attached envelope or scan the QR Code to make your donation today and Empower Border Village Families in Armenia and Artsakh.







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